

HELEN PARKER

CHARLES HOMER STEELE





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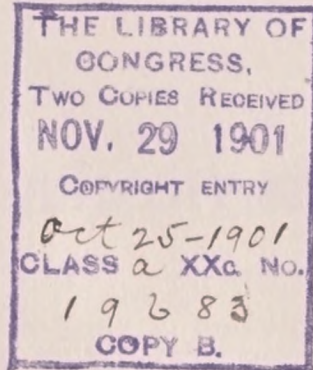
BY

CHARLES HOMER STEELE



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Synopsis

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. A DISASTROUS FIGHT	5
II. THE DEATH OF A LABORER	14
III. THE CHANGING OF A LIFE	25
IV. A LAWYER AND HIS WIFE	32
V. THE TRAINING OF HARRY SPENCER	41
VI. A STRANGE MEETING	48
VII. A CONFERENCE	56
VIII. MR. GREENE'S LOGIC	65
IX. A BALL—THE MERRY DANCE	76
X. A STEP DOWNWARD IN SOCIETY	85
XI. A SALVATION ARMY MEETING, AND A FACE	96
XII. HARRY SPENCER	108
XIII. HARRY SPENCER'S TALK	118
XIV. A SUNDAY OUTING	129
XV. A DEPARTMENT STORE CLERK	146
XVI. MR. GREENE TALKS AGAIN	156
XVII. SPECIAL EFFORTS	167
XVIII. THE LAWYER AND THE DAUGHTER	178
XIX. LOVE—MOST WONDERFUL—MOST MYSTERIOUS	192
XX. AN UNHAPPY RECOGNITION	205
XXI. AN UNPROFITABLE INTERVIEW	218
XXII. SICKNESS	227
XXIII. THE FINDING OF A NEW PLACE	233
XXIV. ANOTHER STEP DOWNWARD IN SOCIETY	246
XXV. THE LEADING OF FATE	259
XXVI. THE ENDING OF AN ATTEMPTED REFORMATION	271
XXVII. UNIMPORTANT DOINGS OF TWO TRAMPS IN IOWA	282
XXVIII. THE COMING OF A TEMPTATION	296
XXIX. THE OUTCOME OF IT	309
XXX. A SALVATIONIST APPEARS TO HARRY	328
XXXI. JACK TARR	338
XXXII. THE CURSE, AT THE LAST, AVERTED	348

Preface

I do not promise to the readers of this volume a stirring romance—replete with chivalry, and bravery, and high-sounding words. Nor is its aim the portrayal of some original, quaint or strong-minded character. Neither is it picturesque because of beautiful scenery, or skillful and harmonious creations of words, and perhaps you will not find much of wit between its covers.

It is something of the life of a wretched man; one of the class all too common in our cities, from whom we turn our eyes impatiently, or with a sigh. "God be thanked," we say, "that we are not such."

We are part of a great world, and the dissimilarity of its people is that, which makes it great. Some of us, refined, cultured—look down, aghast, upon some who are coarse, ignorant and poverty-stricken. Some of us look, open-mouthed and cringing upon some highly favored personage—the son of a rich man is apt to pass by the grimy, sweat-covered, mechanic, loftily and with something of contempt, though his richness and luxury, small speeches and baby manners, shall not gain him one point over the former. And the man in humble estate is apt to look up at him more earthly favored, sourly and disdainfully though his own ingenuity, and active muscles, and deft fingers, are to avail this world only a few short years.

A human life is only a human life, be it where it may, until it looks up and is touched by the divine. In God's eyes the quartz rock may be as precious as the gold. The conversation and doings of the slums may be as interesting as the fashions and amusements of the avenues.

It is written in the Prophets, "And they shall all be taught of God." "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you?—let him show out of a good conversation his works."

In the consideration of the life story told herein then—granting it to be a worthy subject of our thought—may there be interest, and may there be some truths reflected from that book of which Sir Walter Scott said, "There is only one book."

Helen Parker



CHAPTER I

The six o'clock whistle in Stanley's old iron works in an environs of Chicago had just blown with its deafening and undulating roar, the pounding and clanking of machinery and hammers had ceased, and now the men come straggling out, singly and in groups, but all hurrying away as though glad to escape from the gloomy old building.

One of these, an active little man, as he comes out, by a dexterous movement strikes a match on his shoe and lights his pipe, then, after a jest with some one of a passing group, he turns down one of the intersecting streets, evidently to his home, puffing away contentedly and rapidly to keep pace with his swiftly-moving feet.

An unpretentious street this, and, as he passes the homes of laborers, from window and open doorway he meets the expectant glance of wives and mothers. As he turns and looks back he sees a long array of workers following, and here and there one turning into his place of rest and welcome. As he passes a small house, a little blacker, a little more wretched looking, perhaps, than its neighbors, he suddenly hails a little urchin who is playing in the dirt by

the side of the half-rotten sidewalk: "Hello, Johnny, havin' a good time?"

Startled by his voice, the child jumped up, but as he turned to the man, the fright on his face changed to a smile. "Yes, see my digger, that I made," and he came eagerly to show the paddle he had been using.

"Why, that's so dull," said the man, good-naturedly. "I'll sharpen it for you."

Just then the door of the unpainted, dilapidated, little house in front of them opened, and a tall, thin, pale-faced woman stepped out, throwing her faded apron over her head.

"Did you see John comin', Jim?" she asked.

"No, I didn't see him to-night, Mrs. Spencer; I walked purty fast."

"Mebby he wuz kep' to-night, at the works."

"Yes, he might a bin," replied the man, in a not very convincing tone. "How are you gettin'?"

"A little better, I guess," she replied, with a sigh.

"You ain't well yet, I can see."

"No, it seems like I'm so weak, and I get tired out so easy; mebbly I'm gettin' lazy," with an attempted laugh.

"No, 'tain't that, 'tain't that," replied the man, reflectively.

"Well, I must go on, or my wife'll be jawin' me," and as he went on a little farther to his own home, there seemed to be anger upon his face, his teeth were set harder upon his pipe stem, and he muttered something to himself about a "drunken brute."

The woman stood for some time as he had left her,

peering anxiously down the street, then, with another, deep sigh, returned into the house. The inside was as the outside had indicated, poorly and scantily furnished. There were only two rooms and a sort of a lean-to shed at the rear. In the first room was a small cook stove on which the simple supper was cooking, a table, already set for three, an old cupboard with glass doors, several chairs and a sort of couch or small bed. The other served as bed room and boasted a bed, two chairs, an oval looking glass, with comb and brush rack underneath and several pictures upon the walls. The lean-to had little to boast of, indeed, a pile of coal in one end, a barrel filled with old clothes and other promiscuous articles of little value, a wash-boiler, hanging upon the wall, a wash-board and wringer beside the barrel.

As she came inside she glanced hesitatingly about the room, as though at a loss what to do. Moving slowly over to the stove she busied herself a moment with the cooking, then drew up a chair, and, sitting down, gazed abstractedly at the glow of the fire for a short time; then she again went to the door.

"Do you see him coming, Harry?"

"No, he ain't comin' yet."

She stood in the doorway for some time, watching him, and, at short intervals, glancing nervously and expectantly down the street. She went in and sat down again, and again came to the door, but still the expected husband was not in sight. She gave vent to an expression of disappointment and began to walk up and down the sidewalk.

But this she could not endure long in her weak state and her limbs began to tremble beneath her, warning her that she must rest.

"My God," she cried, with a gesture of despair, "He don't come, he's gone again, and he said he wouldn't; he promised me faithful he'd come home to-night, but they've got him again; he can't come now; they've got him fast! Oh, dear, I don't see why he can't come! I wish I could go after him, but I can't; I'm too weak. I can hardly stand. I wish you could go after him, Harry, but you can't, you're too young, yet; he wouldn't come. No, we'll just have to wait; we'll just have to wait," she cried, almost hysterically, looking down into the sturdy wondering face of her boy, upturned to her, "You just watch for him, Harry, and you come in and tell me when he comes," and again she went into the house and closed the door.

A short time the child played on, when, with the sudden artlessness of childhood, he seemed to weary of it, and, running carefully, pushed his paddle into a small opening under the corner of the house—his youthful storehouse—where it would safely await his pleasure. He was evidently about to go into the house when he suddenly thought of his mother's admonition and again ran out to the sidewalk and looked anxiously down the street, his little face drawn in serious thought.

"Guess I'd better go after him," he declared, and, after a moment's indecision, he started slowly, glancing often backward at the house.

However, as he went his courage seemed to increase, and he trotted on down to the works, but whatever the philosophy of his little brain, he passed, with only a roaming glance over the dark pile of buildings, and turned down another street.

"Papa must be at Mike's again—I wish there wasn't any Mike—mamma said he was a bad man and his saloon was real bad to go to." So he was soliloquizing to himself, when he halted at the head of some stairs leading down into a basement saloon and billiard room on the windows of which, in great red letters, was the sign, "Mike's Place."

"I wonder which one's Mike," he thought, with awe, peering down into the already lighted room.

There were five men in the room—one, heavy set, with bald head and bristling reddish side whiskers, was industriously mopping and polishing his bar; the other four were playing at one of the tables. Of these, three were common-looking men, evidently laborers, the other, a tall, well-dressed young man of perhaps twenty-five or thirty, looking somewhat out of place amongst them, as his dress and manner indicated that he came of a higher class in society.

"That one must be Mike, over there," thought Harry, "and there's papa; I thought he was here," but still he hesitated. He had stood leaning against the iron railing looking down into the room as now, before, but always to see the tall form of his mother, shrinking, timidly yet swiftly, across the room to persuade the father to go home. Now, he was alone, and in his feeling of helplessness he stood waiting as before,

wishing for and almost unconsciously expecting to see the familiar form cross over under the light.

But no, she does not come, the men seem to have stopped playing and are talking and gesticulating wildly. Presently one of them shakes his fist savagely in the face of the tall man, but in the same breath he is almost staggered by a fierce blow over the head from a billiard stick in the hands of one of the others.

Then the tall man hastily draws a small revolver, but, before he can use it, the others close in upon him and it is wrested from him and falls to the floor. In the meantime it is discharged—it shatters—breaking a large mirror just over Mike's head, whereupon that individual hastily disappears under his counter.

The fight had become a fierce hand-to-hand conflict, or, rather, fist-to-fist, close proximity having made the billiard sticks useless, and now they clinch, sway backward and forward for a minute, and go down, a struggling, swearing, mass upon the floor.

There they lay writhing, turning, twisting, like a great monster of many arms and legs until, by one of them being suddenly stiffened, a man was forcibly hurled from amongst the shapeless mass and came helplessly rolling and tumbling, right under the window above which the child was standing transfixed with terror.

It was the tall young man, and seemingly greatly confused by his tumble, as he staggered to his feet, he pressed his hands to his head in the attempt to stop his whirling senses, and stood looking with almost

ludicrous astonishment upon the combatants, evidently in doubt as to whether he should again join them.

His clothes were covered with dirt and torn, his face scratched and bleeding, and almost purple from liquor and his exertions. But suddenly, as he caught sight of a large knife on the floor at his feet, he grew pale as death, and, drawing his hand across his eyes, he looked again—it was covered with blood.

He picked it up and for a full half minute stood with his eyes riveted, unblinkingly, upon it. Then, with a sudden impulse thrust it under his coat and into his pocket, and, glancing hastily around to see if he had been detected, for the first time, became aware of the child just above him.

Again, he seemed to be paralyzed, the color went from his face, leaving it chalk-like, but for a great drop of dark crimson blood near his ear. He stood transfixed even as the boy was, as though his frightened childish face were an apparition. But, breaking the spell upon him, he ran to the door, opened it, and, bounding up the steps, hastened down the street, leaving his pallor-stricken face impressed deeply and indelibly upon the mind of the boy.

Indeed, Harry had been so intently watching this man that he had forgotten everything else, but as he again turned and looked down into the room, the others had, for some reason, ceased fighting while Mike was just emerging from under his bar. Two of the men had risen and were stupidly looking down upon the third who lay writhing and groaning while by his side was a great pool of blood,

"Oh, its papa, my papa," cried Harry, catching his breath, and, almost before he knew it, before the trio below could realize what had happened, he ran down the steps and threw himself upon the prostrate form.

"Oh, my papa, he's hurted awful! Can't you get up, papa? Oh, just see the bleed!" and, after an attempt to raise the injured man he began to cry as though his heart would break.

By this time some one had come in and, discovering the state of affairs, in his excitement had summoned others, so that now quite a crowd was pouring in from the street, and tears came to the eyes of some of them as they saw the little fellow's grief. Even Mike, hardened as he was, was momentarily affected, but thoughts of business soon asserted themselves.

"Here you, Ike, do you know where he lives?"

"Somewhere's near, I guess."

"I can show you, I know," spoke up one of the men.

"Well, you must get him home, or he'll bleed to death. There's an old door out there, Ike, and some of you other fellows help him," and he began mechanically and vigorously, mopping the shattered glass off his bar.

"Yes, yes," spoke up another man, "get him home as quick as you can, and I'll send a doctor right up to the house."

Thus admonished, there were many willing hands to help, and they had soon transferred the groaning man to the rude bier, and, with the sobbing boy in the arms of a rough foundryman, by its side, they moved slowly and carefully down the street.

“Mike’s Place” was again open for business, and Mike, while setting out numerous drinks to the assembled crowd, set out also with great eloquence the particulars of the “scrap.” Presently, a policeman came in, but, finding everything quiet and drink flowing freely, he listened also to the particulars, made a note of the matter, took a drink and disappeared.

CHAPTER II

After speaking to Harry, Mrs. Spencer had sunk into a chair with a sigh of weariness and pain.

"Oh, dear, I don't see what we'll do if he don't bring some money home to-night," and she glanced about the miserably-furnished rooms, and at the scantily-set table.

"Seems like we're about run out, with my sickness and all, and now't we can't get Allard's or White's washin's, 'cause I missed 'em last week, an', like enough, McGuires'll quit, too."

"Oh, dear, I ain't fit to do washin's, anyhow. Seems like it 'ud kill me; it's strange people have got to be sick, and so much other trouble, too, but, oh, if John 'ud just bring his money home I wouldn't care fer anything else; if he just didn't drink, we could be happy again and we'd have a-plenty," and seemingly her mind wandered to sweeter days, for her face softened and tears stood in her eyes.

And then her manner slowly changed and you might read upon her face decreasing joy, pain, sorrow, disappointment, as she came back to the bitter present, until upon her features settled a look of resentment and in her eyes anguish gave place to anger.

"He has no right," she cried, rising to her feet and pacing the room with the unnatural strength of emotion, "he is just robbing him, and I can't say a word,

an' seems like John can't either. He promised me faithful he wouldn't go there again to-night, and he meant it, too, when he said it, but they've got him agin or he'd be home. Seems like he can't get away from 'em. For him to work hard all week and then fool it away of a Saturday night, playin' billiards and drinkin', an' then for me to have to go down and bring him home, an' put up with his drunkenness an' he so cross and senseless. I wish some one 'ud just shoot that Mike Denney; seems like I could most do it myself," and her hands clinched tightly and trembled from her emotions. "The scoundrel, it 'ud be a good riddance. I asked and pleaded for him not to sell John, but he only laughed and said it wuz his business to sell any body. Oh, he'll get his pay somehow or sometime—but, oh dear, I can't do anything," and, with the reaction coming upon her, she threw herself, exhausted by both mental and physical distress, upon the bed, and buried her face in her hands in an abandonment of grief and resignation to despair.

How long she had remained thus she did not know; she took no note of time, and was, for a time, if not unconscious, wholly apathetic to all the world and when she was recalled to her senses, it was by a loud knock upon the door, and then it opened and Harry came in crying, and his eyes red and swollen.

She quickly rose to her feet.

"Why, Harry, what——?" but her inquiry was cut short by the sight of a rough-looking man, who had stepped inside, just behind him.

"Is this where Jack Spencer lives?" he stammered,

turning horror-stricken from her white tear-stained face.

"Yes, what is the matter," she asked, anxiously, but as he did not reply, but only stood looking through the still open door, she hastened to his side.

Just coming up to the door were the four men, carrying between them the form of her husband.

For an instant it seemed as though she would faint, but the man, seeing her weakness, caught her and led her to a chair.

"Oh, is he dead; is he dead? Tell me what hurt him."

"No, mum, he ain't; he got into a fightin' scrape down here to Mike's Place an' got stuck. The fellow that stabbed him skipped and nobody knowed him; no, he ain't dead," repeated the spokesman, in a gruff but kindly voice.

"Now, don't you take on; you just set still," as she tried to rise to help the men who were trying to transfer the unconscious man to the bed. "I'll help 'em; you ain't well by your looks."

"I've been sick," she repeated, mechanically, and she watched them as though in a dream, and even when Harry came and leaned upon her knee she only stroked his hair as though unconscious that it was he.

The men awkwardly withdrew, making a great noise, it seemed to her, with their heavy boots, the spokesman, however, pausing at the door, and, taking off his hat, said:

"The doctor's comin' just down the street, mum, an' I hopes your man'll get all right." Then he was gone.

Later the doctor came, closely followed by several of the neighbors, who had seen the sad procession, and with only a glance at her, he went to work upon the injured man while some of the women came to her with questions and words of sympathy and commiseration. But these she hardly seemed to hear or comprehend. She sat motionless, her eyes upon the wounded man and following each movement of the doctor until when he had dressed the wound and done all in his power and was about to withdraw, she stopped him.

"Doctor."

"Well."

"Is he—a-goin' to die?"

The doctor hesitated, for he feared from her manner and looks, the effect of his words, but, deciding it were better to tell her the truth, he replied in a steady, but kindly, tone:

"I am sorry to say, yes; he cannot live."

She only sank back into the chair with the almost inaudible words, "I thought so."

The doctor came back and conversed with one of the women for a few minutes, then said:

"Madame, I am afraid you are sick; you must take this medicine, and then try not to do anything. Mrs. Arthurs here will stay and can do anything needful, for there's very little that can be done, and I would advise you to eat some supper and then lie down and rest. This is a hard blow to you, I know, but death must come sometime. You are weak and almost sick, and fretting and thinking of it will be

a peril to your health; try to think of something else and to ease your mind of the strain upon it."

Fretting—No, the doctor must have used that unthinkingly, for she seemed far from it.

Silent, motionless, her eyes fixed unwearyingly upon the bed, seemingly almost unaffected, but that was outwardly, occasional gleams of the eye told of emotions deep and fierce struggling within. And that was the trouble.

If she had shed many tears and bewailed her fate with wringing of hands, or had she fainted and remained unconscious or lapsed into hysterics, all would have been well and he would have thought little of it, but grief so unemotional and unbending especially in one who was so weak in body, was not natural, and this same unaccountable and unnatural calmness sometimes presaged violent insanity.

And that was why, as he gave her the medicine, which she took mechanically and as though she cared little whether it should help her or no, his gaze was fixed so sternly upon her face, and he studied so earnestly the meaning and the reason in her eyes.

There was nothing yet to show unsettled reason, so, after a few further admonitions to take it as easily as possible and to try and rest, he talked again with Mrs. Arthurs, looked again at the unconscious man and around the room and then departed.

Mrs. Spencer had declined to eat; she could not, she said. But Harry consented, though after he had finished, he would not go to bed but came again and climbed into his mother's lap and was soon peacefully

asleep there, his little tow head upon her arm, his mouth partly open, his breathing deep and regular.

Thus the hours quietly and slowly passed. The other women, had, one by one, gone to their own homes, leaving only Mrs. Arthurs sitting with a fan to keep the flies from the face of the injured man, when they were suddenly startled by a deep groan; his eyes slowly opened and he looked wonderingly about the room.

"Oh, John," cried Mrs. Spencer, as she hastily arose and put Harry down into the chair, and took one of her husband's rough hands in both of hers, while the tears came streaming down her face.

"What are you crying about now?" he asked, gruffly, struggling to rise.

"Oh, oh—curse it all, what's the matter of me?"

"You got hurt, John; don't you remember; they had to carry you home."

He knit his brows in fierce study.

"Ouch! Damnation! Seems if I can't move without it hurtin' me. We was in a scrap down to Mike's, wasn't we?" he asked slowly. Jack Sikes called me a liar, and that other —— were mixed up in it. They were both cheatin' me and Bill, an' we wouldn't stand it—damn me, if I wouldn't like to know who give me this. Oh, if I could get at him."

He had been talking as though to himself, but, in his excitement and anger, he tried to raise his hand, and so became again aware of his wife's presence.

"Oh, John!" but she could not go on, but weeping

violently, she leaned over the bed and kissed his rough, white face.

"What Mary, why do you feel so bad?"

"Oh, John—you must know it—the doctor said—said you couldn't live."

"What—what—me die?" and, in spite of his weakness, he rose to a sitting posture, his face ghastly, but he only sank back with a groan. She had buried her face in her hands to shut his despairing look from her sight.

The thought of death had come to her, as it just now had come to him—as a terrible, unexpected blow. Man must die—sometime—is proved each day of man's existence, but when that indefinite sometime is changed to the definite reality, how sudden it seems and how unprepared we are to welcome it.

In her discouragement and sickness she had looked upon death even as a relief, but now how awful it was. The thought made her shudder. What if she were lying there cold and stiff in death as he must shortly, and little Harry was sitting looking at her or maybe talking to her, trying to wake her.

How terrible that he should go unprepared. The thought of death was bringing convictions of a future life and of a need of preparation, that she had never felt before. He was going away soon, forever; what could she say to him; what would do for parting words. Nothing on earth could be of much interest to him, now, for he was so soon to leave them all. His form would soon be as unconcerned and unaffected by their little home, by the weather, by the neighbors,

by his wages, or even by little Harry and herself, as the damp, dew-covered earth outside.

With these thoughts whirling through her brain, came the awful conviction pressing upon her heart. Any of these remarks of their environment were too trivial and unsatisfying for this occasion. She had nothing to say to him; she dare not look up into his face.

"Die—my God—it cannot be!" he cried out again in husky tones, making another mighty, but unsuccessful, effort to rise.

"——If I ain't," and then he was still again.

Oh what could she do; he might even now be leaving her. Couldn't Mrs. Arthurs help her. She turned partly around but could not see her. Harry was sitting sleepily nodding upon the chair. Oh, why was he so still; what was he thinking of; she must look up.

He was steadily regarding her with almost an expression of fierceness and she quailed before it.

"Mary," and again she was constrained to meet his gaze.

"I'm sorry I went to Mike's; I told you I wouldn't, an' then I went— But it can't be helped, an' I'll never go there agin, yer can count on me this time, Mary," with a feeble smile upon his white face.

"D—— Mike for keeping such a hole, anyhow, and curse me fer being such a fool," he cried fiercely, and then he became calm again.

"Mary, in that 'ere pocket o' my pants you oughter find some money, if they din't snipe it all," and his

face darkened. "Look and see; you'd better; I wish I had more to leave you; I——"

"Never mind that, now," cried the heart-broken wife, "you mus' say good-bye to Harry," and she lifted the sleepy boy up to him.

He seemed greatly affected as he drew the boy's face down to his own and whispered a last farewell. The tears came into his eyes. Then, releasing him from the embrace he stroked his head feebly and lay gazing upon the innocent young face as though forgetful of all else.

"Mary, I ain't done right by you an' the kid—I wish't I'd done different; I wish the rent wer' paid an' you wer' feeling better."

"But, John," cried the wife, desperately, "think o' yourself; what'll become o' you—what—Oh, my God, I wish I knew what to say to you—don't worry about us but think o' yourself, John."

For a moment he lay still, his face growing more and more ghastly, his breath coming harder and harder.

"Curse it, I'm going straight to hell," he cried, with startling certainty.

"Oh, John!"

"It's so; if there's a hell or a heaven, I'm going to hell; I ain't fit for nowhere else; you know that as well as I do—drinkin', fightin', gamblin', swearin', all my life—what a cursed fool I've been," he replied, slowly and steadily.

"Oh, if I had more time, may the devil catch whoever it was stabbed me, curse him, oh —— —— ——"

curse him; may his carcass burn in hell— Oh, I'll see him there; he drinks; he fights; he cheats and murders; he'll go where I do; he won't escape me; I'll have my revenge."

He was sinking, his breath was coming in gasps, and, as he laughed in mad exultation, it was with a whistling, grating sound.

"Oh, I'll see him; he'll be damned; if they don't hang him he'll die a worse death; he's cursed and he'll be cursed forever!"

He paused a moment, panting for breath.

"Oh, it's awful; I'm going; I'm going!"

"John, can't you pray; can't you do something," cried the woman, in a choking voice, but he seemed not to hear her, but lay writhing with terrible curses pouring from his white, drawn lips.

"I'm going; I'm going; hold me; hold me back; catch hold of me!

"Oh——" he screamed, clutching her hand with all the power he possessed. How terrible to feel his life ebbing away; his soul departing with no power to hold it;—his words grow fainter and fainter until inaudible, and yet his lips move in curses against God and man until of a sudden they grow rigid in death! How terrible his ghastly, death-hued face; the glaring eyeballs; the expression, of terror and hatred; the twisted body; the clenched hands!

How terrible to the wife! She shudders and yet is fascinated by the awful agony of his face.

"Oh, my God," she moaned, as the last convulsion seized him, and she buried her face in the bed clothes,

"But no—I have no God—he had no God— Oh, if he'd only knowed about God, or if I could only a told him!"

Then she felt someone place a hand upon her shoulder and Mrs. Arthurs, with tears in her eyes, bent over and whispered:

"You had better go out into the other room now and take Harry."

Seeing that the end was near she had gone for her husband and another neighbor, and now, after urging and accompanying the wife and child into the other room, she returned to assist them in dressing and laying out the body.

CHAPTER III

Harry was frightened and crying, and this fact recalled Mrs. Spencer's attention to him. She undressed him, and, putting him in the little cot, sat down close by to reassure and comfort him, but the death scene had made a vivid and deep impression upon him and had driven sleepiness from his eyes and thoughts.

"Why did papa look so," he asked, over and over again.

"He is dead, Harry!"

"Does everybody look that way when they die, and what made him say such bad words, mamma?"

She did not answer; she could not.

"I don't ever want to die— But he said he was going to hell and he would see that bad man that hurted him, there; I don't see how he could when he died."

It was a hard question for her; she looked down into his anxious face for a moment, then replied slowly:

"When you die, the part of you that's alive goes off to another place, 'way off somewhere, we don't know where, but your body stays here; your arms, and legs, and head, and all, only it's dead; you can't think or talk any more."

"Will I have to die, mamma; will the part of me that talks go away sometime?"

"Yes, child; everybody has to die—sometime."

"Oh, my, and will I have to go to hell, too; papa didn't want to go; he wanted you to hold him; but you couldn't; it must be an awful bad place?"

"Oh, no, no," cried the mother, emphatically, clutching him to her. "You mustn't think of such a thing."

"But why did papa have to go there, then," persisted the child. "He said he was going and that that bad man was going, and Mike— Oh, you won't let me go there, will you?"

"No, no— My God, you'll set me crazy, and, rising, she began pacing the floor, unmindful of weakness.

"I guess that man knew he was going there, 'cause he looked awful scared and white, just like papa did; but Mike didn't look that way; is he going there, do you think?"

"Yes."

"Where will you go, mamma, and me; I'd like to know; I want to go where you go— I won't die 'till I get to be a real big man though, will I?"

"No, no, no," cried the mother, desperately and earnestly, and sitting down again beside him, she told him as best she could, of that other and better place called heaven, where some people go, and what a beautiful place it is, while Harry lay back drinking it in, in the faith and credulity of childhood, his eyes shining, his face aglow with interest.

As for her, there were conflicting emotions fighting within; she was surprised at herself that she knew so much of the wonderful city, and that here she was

telling her child about it, and the angels and God— Did she believe in those things? She could hardly say; they did not seem untrue, as she spoke of them— but, if she did, how little they had influenced her life. When had she learned those thoughts and theories of eternal life? Not since her marriage; back, back, they must have come from early youth; yes, she had heard such things then from her mother, and she could still remember the death, when she was a girl of fourteen, of that mother, how calm and peaceful it had been, and how she had called her, with the other children, and asked them all to meet her in the better world. She must have believed in it, then. What—oh, what could she have been thinking of all these years? But her mother—there came to her as she talked, the picture of that once-loved face; she thought of it now as illumined, smiling, beautiful, surrounded by the angels—and, almost unconsciously and with unconscious beauty she was picturing in words the scene impressed upon her mind.

“Oh, mamma,” Harry cried, “I want to go there when I die; can’t I— We will go there, won’t we?”

She did not answer; could she; what must she do— She had told Harry that only good people could go there, but—

“Mamma,” interrupted Harry, “why didn’t you tell papa about heaven; why didn’t he be good, so he could go there?”

“I don’t know,” she replied, huskily, and getting up, began again to pace backward and forward. His awful cursings came ringing in her ears as she thought

of him. Visions of his ghastly face and his writhing, struggling body arose before her eyes. She shuddered, and said:

“My God, it’s awful— Oh, he tried hard to hold back; but it was no use, and I couldn’t say a word! “An’ he were certain he were going to the bad place; people must know when they die, ’cause my mother seemed not a bit scared o’ dyin’ but sure she wer’ going right to heaven. I wonder where I’d a-been if I’d a-died instead of him; seems to me like I’d have prayed.” Ah, the conviction comes upon her; she was not fit for the better world, but she must not go to the other—nor Harry.

Fiercely the battle raged within her; a battle of giants; of habits and convictions, good recollections and evil recollections of the past, the city of death, and the city of joy in the future; the opportunity and the weakness of the present, till, at last, with tears coursing down her cheeks she knelt by the bedside—where Harry, fallen asleep, was unconsciously smiling—even as she kneeled she could not forbear pressing a kiss upon his lips—and then with a passionate mother’s words she asked the mighty God to save him—and her; to forgive her, and to help her understand how to be good.

I would pray if I wer’ dying an’ I’ll pray now, was her simple doctrine and somehow the ray of light and hope that had come to her through her distress sufficed, and there came presently the answer—the Holy Spirit, with its assurance, and peace, and joy, how great— She arose, her face brightened and changed.

The sun of another day was just rising and Mrs. Arthurs came in and said:

"Well, I must go home and get breakfast for my man so he can go to work, but I'll try to get Mrs. Barker or someone to come right over."

"No, they will all have to get their breakfasts, and I—but if you will tell Mrs. Adams to come right after breakfast, and—and bring her Bible. I thank you an' your man, Mrs. Arthurs," she said simply, her plain face somehow gloriously re-enforcing the few spoken words.

"That's all right, and I couldn't do much for you," she stammered, looking into Mrs. Spencer's face with surprise. "Seems to me you are—oh—taking it easier than you wuz at first."

"Yes, 'cause I've got God to help me stand it now."

"Oh," and her face took on an expression of incredulity. "I must go, and I'll tell Mrs. Adams for you."

How little does the death of one affect this great world of ours, where it is said each second a soul loosened from the body of this death, glides away, unseen and almost unnoticed, to the unknown beyond! How little, even if he be a man of importance and fame; how infinitely little, if he be a grimy laborer, wretched and drunken!

And yet, even such leave a vacancy, a place, to be filled by another, and one of the wonders of this earth is that it is so easily and quickly filled; someone, although seemingly different, has been all unconsciously developing and training for that very place.

A laborer dies, another can do his work; a doctor dies, young men are busy studying and learning the art; someone will step forward, the world shall not lack for doctors; a learned man expires, a younger man is pressing forward in search of still greater thoughts; the world does not lose its wisdom. A good man dies, some child is being carefully reared, is strengthening a character of truth and virtue, that the world may not grow worse; a wretched drunken out-cast perishes, some boy is being dragged rapidly down from the beauty and innocence of childhood and stands red-faced and trembling, ready to rush in and take his place; one generation crowds another out of the way; death means opportunity to the living; there is a quick, unhesitating rush for his or her place, and the earth whirls on unmindful.

But even the worst of men leave a sorrowing heart, somebody or something, to mourn them for a time, be it only a hungry dog which, wont to follow at its master's heels, goes searching, sniffing, everywhere, or sits and howls in its loneliness; be it only a faithful horse, which turns its head in expectation and whinneys, and yet, no master comes; be it a care-worn woman, who has borne his sorrow, his shame, his poverty, his cares.

John Spencer had died, and though a few lines sufficed to tell it in the papers, though some as they read said to themselves, if they said anything: "Good riddance; the world is better off without such drunken roughs; yet, his death effected a change, which, so infinitesimal to the world, seemed very important to a few.

To Mrs. Spencer and Harry the world seemed to have changed. The pain and misery he had caused them, but could not cause again, were forgotten; but they recalled and missed his better traits, those things that it was possible to admire and care for in his past; what affection he had had toward them. A new hand came to the works. The neighbors were wont to say for a time: "How strange not to see John comin' home from his work." The little children spoke in low, awed, tones of Harry Spencer's father being dead.

CHAPTER IV

Two elfish little bootblacks, shuffling along the street in the careless manner of those who have no destination, have turned their attention, for the moment, to a drunken man just ahead of them and are exchanging shrewd, but uncouth, remarks, and laughing immoderately in their shrill, harsh voices, at his expense, while he pauses in his unsteady walk, at intervals, to turn and regard them with the questioning, stupid look of an inebriate.

How varied we creatures are—tears come to the eyes and sorrow to the face of an old woman as she passes them, two richly dressed girls shrug their shoulders, pull aside the irskirts and giggle, a sharp-faced woman mutters something in disgust, an elderly merchant pauses to laugh at the “boys,” one passes with a smile at the ludicrousness of the man’s actions, and another at the antics and laughter of the “little devils” behind, some pass thoughtless and uncaring, one man calls out to another: “There’s Lawyer Parker drunk, as usual—now watch him get on that car; see that, isn’t he spry,” and they laughed as he fumbled with his feet at the steps, and, as a moment later, standing unsteadily upon the rear platform, he was drawn from their view and their thoughts.

But let us follow him.

As he alights in front of the large brown-stone resi-

dence, on the front door of which is the inscription, L. A. PARKER, a policeman, who was just then standing upon the opposite corner, hurried across the street and intercepted him.

The two were evidently acquaintances, for Mr. Parker extended his hand.

"How do, Mike, where the d——'ve you been keeping yourself lately?"

"Most anywhere—But Mr. Parker, I have orders to arrest you."

"What!" gasped the intoxicated man, weakly.

"I came to arrest you!"

"What for—why should you arrest me?"

"I hate to do it, Mr. Parker, but it's because I have to," he replied, steadily. "It's on the charge of forging some notes; you'll go along quietly, won't you?"

"Yes—hold on—let me think," and, turning, he sat down upon the edge of the curbing and pressed his hands upon his head. Thus he sat motionless and silent, so long that the officer was about to make his presence and intentions again known, when he suddenly looked up, seemingly greatly sobered and changed in that brief interval, and asked in a husky tone:

"You want me to go with you, Mike?"

"Yes, you will have to go with me!"

"Can't I go over and say good-bye; you can go along and I won't try to get away."

"Yes, if I go with you," replied the officer, hesitatingly, "I guess it would be all right."

"You know me, Mike; it'll be all right," he said in

a reassuring tone, and then, before they reached the door, he stopped:

"It's a deucedly hard job; won't you kind of explain to 'em—to her, I mean."

"Yes, I suppose I can," with a grim smile.

Just then the door opened and several richly-dressed ladies emerged.

"Hold on, let them get away, hope to —— that's all of them," he cried angrily.

"We'd better go in," he continued after a moment's wait, and, wiping the perspiration from his brow he led the way up the steps and opened the door. Ringing the bell for a servant, he inquired unceremoniously for his wife; was she in the parlor; was she alone; the girl did not know.

Turning, he led the way down the hall, until he halted before a curtained door and again wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"—— me, but I hate to," he whispered huskily.

"Come right in behind me now, and explain it to her—she's alone," he continued, after taking a long survey of the room through the parted draperies.

"Come on, now."

As the two men entered, Mrs. Parker raised her eyes and, seeing one of them a stranger, instinctively received him with the self-possession and calmness of a society lady. But her face evidently darkened; what was a policeman doing here in her house; what could her husband mean by bringing him in to her.

"Sir, to what are we indebted for this visit; Leslie, what does this mean?"

At her question the unhappy man turned to the policeman appealingly, and he, inwardly cursing such a cowardly man, fumbling his cap in his hands and shifting from one foot to the other, replied:

“Mum, your husband is arrested for forging.”

“He is arrested,” she cried, in surprise, her face paling.

“Yes, mum, for forging notes and getting money on ‘em.”

“Oh,” and she turned and looked upon her husband as though she would penetrate through and through him.

Mrs. Parker was as her husband: tall, not over twenty-five, with dark hair and eyes, with features strong and regular; one might say beautiful, but with a nature plainly proud and self-willed to complement them.

“Is that so; have you done that?” she asked, in a sharp tone.

“Yes,” he replied, in an unsteady voice. He could not deny it, though it were sealing his doom, but he did not raise his eyes from the carpet.

Sorrow, pain, despair, regret, might each and all have struggled within her, but it was with a voice of concentrated anger and shame, and with flashing eyes, that she spoke:

“You cowering wretch, how dared you; no wonder you’re afraid to look up; isn’t it enough to get drunk and go staggering around, looking like a fool, without forging notes and getting arrested, so I’d be the talk of the town, as the wife of a thief and a jail-bird—Wretch—I hate you.”

Seemingly aroused by this abuse, the lawyer replied, "Josie, I know it's a bad go, but you had to have money and I couldn't get it any other way."

"What, you lay it onto me; it was because I needed it; you did it for my sake; I say, Lem Parker, you spent it gambling and drinking; if you'd straighten up and go to work you could make some money honestly, other men do."

"I suppose there was no excuse," he replied, with a sigh, "but we both needed money and that was the easiest way to get it and so I did it, and it can't be helped."

"No, it can't; you might have known this would happen when you did it; I won't dare to go on the street; what'll Browns think, anyhow; and Simpsons, and Hayes, and Johnstons; dear me, what can I do!"

"D—— Browns, and Johnstons, and Simpsons, and the whole tribe," cried the lawyer, in a passion, and seeming to forget his shame. "Tell 'em it was me that did it, not you; they can't blame you; that's all you care about—what'll they think about this and what'll they think about that. If I can just make them think I'm rich. If you can get a new hat like Mrs. Johnston's, or only just give such a sweet little tea as Mrs. Simpson's, or if you could have just such a fat nigger waiter as Brown has, you would be happy and all them working and worrying to keep up a goody-goody, honey-coated, gold and silver front for you to look at, and admire, and make a fuss over— D—— hypocrites!"

"I don't mind telling you that that Cy. Brown, who

you think is so d—— aristocratic and so stylish, makes his money by running two or three saloons that I drink at, and billiard rooms that I play at. He's just as much a wretch and a scoundrel as I am, and he'll go to hell just as quick "

"Why, Lem Parker, how dare you talk so, about him?"

"About him—oh, yes—he's got money; he's got a nice house and some lovely horses; he don't get drunk if he is getting rich from other people drinking; he don't gamble away his money if he does rake it in from us common fools; he's aristocratic; he's way up in society— Say, why don't you call me aristocratic—I drink his whisky and that ought to be right in style."

"Here you, policeman," cried the wife, her eyes blazing, her hands clenched, "take that man," and she emphasized the man, "right out of here."

"Josie," he continued, in a quieter tone, "I came to say good-bye to you and Helen."

"You can't see Helen," she cried.

"See here," he replied, "I'm going to see Helen before I go; send for her or I will go up to her."

For a moment she stood as though to defy him, but, seeing he was determined, she said, "You shan't go up there," and, stepping to a speaking tube that communicated with the nursery, she ordered the child to be brought down.

The interval that elapsed seemed an age, probably, to all three, not a word was spoken; the policeman sat alternately gazing about the richly-furnished room,

and at the carpet; the lawyer, at intervals, turned his eyes toward his wife, but she stood waiting, in pretended unconsciousness of both.

At last, the door opened and a young French governess appeared, leading by the hand a beautiful little girl of five years. She evidently had taken after her mother; her hair was not quite so dark, nor her eyes, but her features were similar and one could judge even, at this early age, somehow from her movements or the toss of her long curls, that her temperament was also similar. Her dress was of a pretty striped brown, and, reaching barely to the knees, showed her slender, well-dressed, legs, while her little arms were bare almost to the elbow, except for a ruffle of fine lace. Altogether, she was a dainty little creature as she stood looking wonderingly from one to the other, especially, and with awe, upon the policeman whom the nurse had always used as an object of intimidation.

The lawyer gazed upon her fondly and admiringly. He had always loved her seemingly more than anyone else; she had been the only pride of his life, and, though he did not get to see her very often, he always watched her eagerly when it was his privilege. The happiest times of his life seemed, strangely enough, some Sunday afternoon when he could take her for a walk, listen to her countless questions and watch her little form dancing along by his side.

He arose and started to her but was stopped by the sneering tones of the wife:

"I am opposed to having my daughter even touched by a thief."

He had almost forgotten in his admiration of the child, his awful mission, and now, like a lightning flash, it came back to him, and together with the cold words of his wife, and the sickening sensation of his shame, it seemed as though he had been struck a blow in the face.

"How can you talk that way before her," he cried, his face paling.

Helen was looking up into his face with surprised eyes, and, being painfully conscious of the scornful eyes of the wife, and the prying, inquiring, looks of the governess, upon him, knowing that each of his movements was being watched hawk-like, he felt it almost impossible to take leave thus of his child. But, with a sudden impulse he snatched her up and pressed her to him, his eyes streaming with tears.

Mrs. Parker opened her mouth as though to speak again but thought better of it, or some better impulse checked her, and presently he released the child with a faint farewell and turned to her, drying his eyes.

But, though silenced, she was not softened. This man had been for a long time a humiliation to her pride, an impediment to her progress in society, and a terrible drawback to her present standing; but now, this awful disgrace to cap the climax. Already she had thought of a hundred remarks and queries that would be in circulation the next day; she had pictured in her mind the big head-lines in the papers, and the sensational accounts. Some of them, no doubt, would tell all about the arrest and the parting between him and his family. They would get it out of that police-

man and then add to it. Some of them would bring up that that was worst of all, their financial circumstances—how much they were in debt, how prosperous Lawyer Parker had been until drink had reduced him to poverty—and, to meet the extravagant wishes of his wife, he had, in desperation, taken to forging notes. It was gall and bitterness to her whole nature—she hated him.

So, as he turned to her, with eyes still dimmed with tears and all his better impulses and desires aroused, he was, as it were, frozen by her cruel, cold, steady look.

An imprecation came to his lips as he turned to the policeman: "Well, I'm ready now, Mike. Good-bye, Josie," he added, in the same tone, and speaking over his shoulder.

"Well, it is good-bye," was the answer. "For good, too; you need never come back; I'll have a divorce before you get out."

He turned to her with a pale face, "Is that so?"

"Yes, that's so; if you can't support us without stealing you needn't try," she replied, with inconceivable bitterness.

Again it seemed as though he would answer with an oath, but he started toward the door with a longing, lingering look at the wondering child.

CHAPTER V

Unstopped by rude cottage walls, unseen by the watchers, unfelt and unnoticed by the sleeping child, something had come — thrilling, penetrating, with marvelous power, through Mrs. Spencer's being—something, not coming from the soul that had fled, not produced by the mystery of death, not sorrowful and despairing, not insensate, deadening, but something alive, comforting, lifting up—coming from Him in the sky who had not unemotionally, not unpityingly, watched her sorrow, felt her fears and heard her words.

How strange that man should live, year in and year out, in this vineyard of God's, cultivating, reaping the harvest, eating, hoarding all, unmindful of the Master's share, unheeding his calls, repulsing his messengers, unearring of the warning of death or expulsion from the vineyard into wretchedness, careless of his message of forgiveness and love, disliking those who would serve the Master; counseling with the rebellious, driving away the Son as He yet comes with pardon, unmoved by his eternal cry in the agony of death: "Forgive them!"

How strange that man should have turned from God to worship a stone; a substance, a toad, a cow; and, yet the whole dark past stand forth to prove it, and to throw a greater beauty on the Christian era coming—

so now the dark terrible death of the laborer would throw in greater contrast the beautiful new life that comes to the wife—his wretched, seemingly useless existence by its shadow helped strengthen a seed of Godliness, that, when started, would branch out in beauty and strength, here and there, as the ages pass away.

Mrs. Spencer was an ignorant, unrefined, foundryman's wife, but there came to her this feeling of wonder at herself, and awful regret, unavailing, only as it is taken note of and remembered by one more than human. Her marriage to John Spencer had been, from the first, injurious to better impulses, for, though clever, he had always been wild and irreverent, and uncaring of churches and such, and she, with her mother dead, and cut off from all other family ties, had come into sympathy with him.

Then, for years, he had been descending, weakening, becoming more and more helpless in his slavery to drink and to the fascination of gambling, and she all these years living and striving with him, enduring pain and disappointment and poverty, in her own strength, existing almost without what the world calls pleasure. Her mind rarely penetrated outside of the humble little street on which they lived, she neighbored only with a few of the nearest neighbors, lived with an apathy to the great and elevating philosophies, sciences, literature and philanthropies of the world, almost equal to that of the great, gentle-eyed draft horses as they went clattering up and down the pavement each night and morning to their work, until,

following him, as he left her, into the great eternity its awfulness had startled and awakened her.

The sinner is blinded, the saint has open vision; the sinner is dead, the believer is alive unto God; the wicked man lives and walks in darkness, the Christian walks in the light. As the revealing, penetrating life had come to her as she read in the Bible she had procured, the high thoughts, the beautiful ideals, the comforting words, she felt this press heavily upon her; she had been unaccountably blinded; she had been in darkness and poverty, where she might have had light and understanding; she had been narrow and weak where she could have had happiness and aid; her life had been a miserable failure.

What might the Gospel have done for her husband, might she have been more efficient in lifting him up if she had been standing on the better foundation herself, could she have pointed the way to him, could she have said something in those last moments that would have dispelled those horrible curses which set so heavily upon her, and that seemed so vividly impressed upon Harry's mind—these things she thought of as another day and night passed, until the funeral, and, when the husband had been consigned to earth and they were alone in the little house with all the dread of loneliness upon them, she sank upon the floor and wept passionately and with a grief that seemed only calmed by the efforts of Harry, who raised her head, and, rubbing her cheeks with his chubby hands, soothed her to the best of his ability.

But now she could not long sit inactive, however great

her grief; and, whatever the thoughts of the past, the future, with all its questions, was before her; death had changed the physical surroundings of herself and Harry; she could look no longer expectantly down toward the works; she must depend upon herself, adjust herself to a different environment and be a father and mother to her boy.

The rent on their house was due and she had only three dollars that had remained of her husband's wages to pay it, so she disposed of their furniture and household goods and paid the balance and also a bill for groceries that was owing at a store near by, which diminished this dearly-bought sum to a handful, that to some would have been regarded as a desperately small and insufficient amount to begin, as it were, the battle of life.

But Mrs. Spencer was, when aroused, a woman of energy, she had seen the hard side of life, and, having had of late to support the family to a great extent, by doing washings for several families of more prosperous merchants who lived near by, until her sickness had deprived her of their custom, she felt that now she could make a living in that way, if she could find a neighborhood in which there would be that sort of work for her.

So, clutching this small remnant of their fortune tightly in her hand, and breathing a prayer to that Being whom she had lately learned to confide in, she left Harry with Mrs. Adams one afternoon and set out upon her search, and, after considerable trouble, she succeeded in finding a place that suited her.

It was a small room in a richer part of the city, rented by a seamstress, a poor widow, like herself, who gained her living by doing plain sewing and by the re-renting of this room; and, so it was that, upon the third day after the funeral, she was taking leave of a little group of women in B—— street, and that with tears in her eyes, she set out for this new place, leading Harry by the hand.

Mrs. Brown, for this was the seamstress' name, upon learning of her late affliction, was very kind, and, by telling the story to several of her patrons, secured their washing for her, or, when there was no work for a day or two she would have her help on the sewing in part-payment of her rent.

And so here she came to be happier, perhaps, than she had been for years; poor, yet never harassed by poverty, working hard, and yet, as she came tired and discouraged, perhaps, from some hard day's washing into Mrs. Brown's cozy little rooms, for they had soon come to live together as though one family, to find her ever quietly sewing, and little Harry running to meet her, she was cheered and strengthened greatly, and then the evening came in contrasting quiet, restfulness and enjoyment.

Mrs. Brown was a quiet gentlewoman of considerable education and of seemingly never-failing patience and charity, and her manner and words served always to quell any discontent or anger engendered by the selfishness and thoughtlessness with which she came in contact so often.

She had started Harry to school and he was ever

ready to tell of some school-boy adventure or of some strange or exciting thing he had seen or heard of, and to show her his lessons for the day. Then, after supper, she would read awhile in the Bible, or, perhaps, from some religious paper or sermon, Mrs. Brown listening with her busy needle still going, and Harry interrupting now and then to ask some question, or speak of some suddenly thought-of incident that must be told.

Sometimes kind people, finding she had a son, would give her some of their children's toys or story books for him, and, as she read these books, Harry's joy seemed complete, for, like many another child, his interest in the heroes and heroines was almost pathetic. Then, Sundays were beautiful, quiet days to them; they always attended the services at the ——— Methodist Church, near by, where they had soon gained friends and sympathizers, some being from those most noble people, the unselfish rich. The rest of the day was spent, generally at home, in that quiet, content and peace, which is true happiness.

So the change in Mrs. Spencer had been radical, once for all. Though she had been very ignorant of the things of God, not even having had a Bible, she now studied it faithfully, and found therein each day as new hope of life, though she had been criminally careless and thoughtless. Now, each day had its meditation and prayer, belief had driven out unbelief, the love of Christian fellowship had come to fill a vacancy, the soul so well-nigh perished was alive and glowing.

And to her, that her son should develop religiously was of as much, yes, more importance, than that he

should broaden out and grow heavier, physically, and as he would do one with good food and exercise, she saw that he did not lack for that which should stimulate the other.

Thoughts of her husband were always as spurs to her, and so, above all, she strove to teach him that he should cling to religion as the pearl of great price, that none should wrest it from him. She tried to balance his mind unswervingly upon those great moral questions that would, in the future, come up in varied and multitudinous shapes to test his judgment. She strove not only that he should be educated and cultured and refined in manner, that he might be able to move in the better class of society, but she sought to interest him in their society, that he should become accustomed to it and look upon it as his natural place. She thus endeavored to instill into his mind those ideas of morality, of unselfishness, and unhaughtiness of character that go to make up good society, as riches and fashions and accomplishments do not.

And, so the years went by, Harry came to be a strongly-built, quiet, pleasant-faced boy, honest, and straightforward, and of good habits and character, as any decent boy must have from such training, helping his mother what and when he could, but, as she wished, attending school, until, at the age of seventeen, that he might further relieve her of her sore burden of work, he voluntarily gave up his ideas of further schooling and accepted a position in the grocery store of Mr. Greene, a prominent member of their church and one of his best friends.

CHAPTER VI

Five years have passed away and Mrs. Parker has sold her fine residence and part of her fine furniture, has dispensed with one or two of her servants and has moved into a neat little cottage near by.

Was it from poverty? No, no— Heaven forbid that anyone should think of such a thing! Had she not told everyone that she did so admire that particular little cottage, how lovely it was, and if she could just purchase it and get rid of her big house, how happy she would be, and as for those extra servants, they would only be standing around in each other's way, and her horses and carriages, she did not want to bother with them any more. Did she not dress as well as ever? If some of her gowns were re-made and remodeled from old ones, was it not done so skilfully as to escape detection? Though if she must economize in private, she flattered herself, the public had not guessed it.

Was she not recognized in select society as a leader; was not she one of the wittiest, so that her speech was eagerly listened to; was she not always graceful and self-possessed; did she not help set the pace of society and help determine those little trifles which denote change in style?

Did not the papers describe her beautiful gowns as often as they did those of others; was she not as erect

and beautiful as ever? Yes. But a careful observer would notice that pride—and time—had sharpened her features, a little. In her eyes was a deeper yearning, a stronger desire, for that which, when it came, did not bring satisfaction, an air of defiance about her. She had not died of mortification because of the shame brought upon her by the forgery; not she, she had conquered it, overcome it, and established her position in spite of and beyond it.

She was sitting in her room, one hot summer day, slowly rocking in a large comfortable chair, fanning herself, with one hand, while in the other she held a novel she had just finished, when the door opened and three little girls came rushing in.

“Why, Helen, what do you mean, child; put your hat on your head.”

The foremost of the three slowly pulled her hat, which was hanging by the strings around her neck, up to its usual position, at the same time telling the cause of their hurried appearance.

“We was playin’ out there under the tree and a man came over on the corner and stood for a long, long, time, looking right at us, and then he come over toward us, and he looked so funny, that we was ’fraid of him and come in the house,” and she stuck her lips out in a pout.

“Yes, an’ Susie’s best doll was left out there, and I’m afraid he’ll get it,” put in one of the girls.

“And my hat, too,” said the other, who was bare-headed. “Come, and see him, Mrs. Parker, what do you suppose he wants?”

"Pshaw, it wasn't anybody that would hurt you; it might have been a tramp," she replied, with a smile, rising and going to the window. As she did so, she gave a sudden start and her face darkened; he was slowly advancing toward the door.

She hurried to it and opened it before he could ring, and for some minutes the two were engaged in earnest conversation, in low, deep tones, so the girls, though they listened breathlessly, could hear only now and then a word or a sentence.

From these they could gather only the one thought, that he wanted to come in, while she strictly forbade it.

Presently, she shut the door and came back into the room, where she found the three little girls leaning against the doorpost, straining their ears to hear and yet to be unseen. Her face was flushed and she trembled from suppressed anger, and as the children burst into a peal of laughter she only met them with a frown.

"Children, were you listening; that was very impolite of you, very, did you hear what we said?"

"Only that you told him he couldn't come in," replied one of them.

"Was he a tramp?" another asked.

"Yes, I guess so," she answered absently, and, sitting down, she soon became absorbed in deep study.

The children were about to return to their play, thinking little of the incident, when she spoke to them:

"See here—girls. I wouldn't go out there again;

that man is waiting out there; I would play here in the house."

"Oh, dear," sighed one of the girls, "It's too hot to play in the house; it's so much nicer out under the trees; I wish that hateful man would go away."

"We was going to have a lunch," cried another, with an angry fling of her hat.

"He's got to go away," broke out Mrs. Parker, so passionately, as to surprise the children. "I'll have him arrested for trespassing." Then, calming herself, she said, "Just wait a little while and I think he will go away, and, Helen, listen to me, if you ever see this man anywhere, on the street or here in the yard, you must come into the house, or, if he should come to the house when I am away you must not see him; he's a bad, wicked man, and he might carry you off somewhere."

"Oh, dear," cried Helen's playmates, in dismay, turning to her, "What a mean man; why don't you have a policeman get after him; why, Mrs. Parker, he ought to be put in jail; why, I'd be scared to death if I was you, Helen," and one of them even began to cry.

Helen turned pale, but she declared stoutly, "I'll hit him, if he tries to take me."

"Oh, never mind, don't cry about it, Lucile, you can go out and play if you want to; I guess he's gone now, but if you see him coming, come right into the house."

"Yes, we will," and in a short time they were playing as merrily as ever, while she sat at the window, watching them, with knit brows.

For some time after this they were disturbed quite frequently by the sight of "that man," as the children always called him, standing upon the opposite corner or walking slowly up and down the pavement, looking steadily at the cottage or any of its occupants who happened to be visible. He came to be a sort of bugbear to Helen. It was his features and his form that arose in her childish dreams to injure her. It was on his account that she must run to the house, or stay inside the yard, and so, besides her fear of him, she came to have a childish hatred toward him for disturbing her play.

But presently he disappeared, and, as years went by, she forgot all about him. She passed through all the vicissitudes and periods of a young girl's life, through all its trials and joys, much as other children in the society about her. How varied each one's life seems, to themselves, at this age; how important each little happening, how quick to fancy we are having a hard time; how quick to quarrel and then to be friendly, how impetuous in the main, alike, at this age, careless of the future, enjoying the present, now whistling or singing, now pouting or crying, angered by discipline, less reverent, quick of perception, tenacious of our rights, eager for any change, restless, regarding study or work as an evil, looking upon this world, to a certain degree, as made especially for us and to suit our wishes, until time, experience and closer contact with men, comes to rudely overthrow these ideas!

Physically, we are breathing the same air, eating,

drinking, talking, sorrowing, or laughing, and all the time that unexplainable, marvelous little germ of life within is silently gathering and moulding all, impartially into the little bodies, perfecting the lithe, graceful figure, dark eyes and rosy lips of one little beauty, the plump features, snub nose and yellow hair of another, or the spindle legs, bent form and shiny eyes of the little Jew, and so determining what manner of man we shall be.

But, more marvelous is that co-working, yet overruling, divine spark of life, which, as a magnet, catches each childish pain or pleasure, each thought, each inspiration, each throb of love or hate, each bit of learning, as they come flying to it, and moulds them into those inner children, that we only see through the bright eyes, and hear through the small lips, determining the foundation of character so that we come out of this period—started—on different paths.

So now, Helen had come to be a proud, giggling, simpering, and sometimes called by an uncharitable elder, senseless school girl. She was promenading on the street one afternoon with two of her girl friends, also two of the boy friends, talking and laughing, as though the whole world was a joke, when, suddenly, one of the boys who was walking backwards, in front of them, collided with a man and the whole party stopped.

He was tall and slim, his clothes worn and jagged, his face bearing strongly the marks of drink and dissipation, his head covered by a crushed and broken Derby hat; in short, he was a common-looking bum.

But the strange thing about him was that his eyes were glued to the face of Helen Parker with such a strange look of questioning and uncertainty. She had looked up to see the cause of their delay, and had been fascinated seemingly by his gaze, she did not know him, she could not account for his look, but somehow she thought she had detected the start of recognition. Suddenly, it flashed into her mind, it was he of whom her mother had warned her, years before, the terror of her childhood.

She turned red, then white, then red; she knew her companions were watching her, but she could not avoid his burning gaze. How long they had stood thus, face to face, she did not know, when one of the youths cried out in tones of contempt:

"Come, old man, are you going to let us past?"

He had just started to speak, but these words seeming to remind him of the presence of the others, his lips closed, his eyes hastily took in the other members of the group, and the spell removed, as it were, they brushed past him and went on down the street, laughing and jesting at his expense.

"He was pretty badly stuck on you, eh Helen?" inquired one of the young dudes, with a provoking laugh, "I don't blame him any, myself."

"See here, I'm getting jealous, I am; why didn't you tell me you had another fellow?"

"When did you get acquainted with him, anyhow?"

"Why, I'm just dying to know who he can be."

"Maybe he was some rich young fellow, masquerading, who knows," hazarded another.

In vain Helen protested, she did not know him; he must have been drunk or crazy; in vain did she try to laugh it off. They had a good joke on her and they must improve it, and improve it they did until she left them in a pout.

She hurried home intending to ask her mother what was the mystery between her and that man, but her mother was not at home and she would not be back till tea. With an exclamation of anger she turned and went to her room, threw herself into a chair and began to read. Her mother brought company to tea and she had no chance to ask her that night.

On the next day she was almost plagued to death by some of the boys, and then at night, to cap the climax, as she was going home with two of the girls, she caught sight of the same individual coming toward them.

Catching her companions by the arms, she pulled them into a store, her face crimson, and stammering and embarrassed, bought the first object that caught her eye, while the two girls were almost smothering with laughter.

When he had passed she hurried home and burst in upon her mother, who, luckily, was at home and alone, or the servants would have suffered, with sobs shaking her voice yet stamping her foot in rage.

“Who is he, I’d like to know, that man you told me would carry me off, a long time ago?”

CHAPTER VII

"Why Helen—what's the matter, now?" cried her mother, starting up so quickly that her book dropped from her hands to the floor, "What man can you mean, anyhow?"

"He's a tall, ragged, red-faced, drunken-looking man, who stopped me on the street yesterday and stood looking right at me, and now all the girls and some of the fellows at school are teasing me about him, and I won't stand it."

"How did he come to do that?"

"I don't know; then to-night I saw him coming down the street and the girls almost died laughing at me—that Julia Marcome is too hateful, anyway—he knows me, and I remember he came to our house a long time ago, and you told me he might carry me off. Don't you remember, that tramp, you said he was?"

"Oh, has he come back?"

"Yes, he's come back."

"And when did you see him?"

"I saw him yesterday, and I saw him to-night."

"What did he say; did he tell you anything?"

"No, he just looked at me, and to-night, I dodged into a store so he wouldn't see me, but you did not tell me what he is, or who he is," she cried impatiently.

But, still, her mother did not answer but sat with a frown upon her face, and a far away, unconscious look in her eyes that exasperated Helen, so after savagely

kicking and knocking everything about her, she was about to flounce herself out of the room, when her mother said: "Helen, come here."

"What?"

"Come here. I might as well tell you who this man is, and how he comes to know you. He is your father and was my husband."

"He my father," she cried, instinctively throwing back her head, "was he your husband?"

"Yes, Helen, no wonder you are surprised."

"Why—I don't see—I thought he was dead," she faltered.

"No—but dead to us; he was sent to the penitentiary for forging, when you were only four or five years old. I told him then we parted for good and I secured a divorce from him."

"It's strange—had he just come back from there, before?"

"Yes—I suppose so."

"Were you really afraid he would carry me off?"

"Yes, he seemed to like you better than anyone else, and I was afraid he might try to get you away from me, even if he couldn't provide for you or keep you."

"Why couldn't he?"

"He drank and gambled all his money right away; you say he was ragged and drunken-looking; he drank then, he drinks worse now; that was the reason he went to forging."

"And did he ever try to take me?" asked Helen, breathlessly.

"No, he wanted to see you, but I told him he had better keep clear away from you; that he was not fit to come near you, and, so far, he has had the good sense to stay away; I hoped he would altogether."

"Then I was afraid," she continued, in a strangely unemotional tone, "that he might try to make me divide the property; I had made him sign it over to me pretty soon after we were married, for fear he would gamble it away. But then if he had come around and raised a fuss, and threatened to hang around and tag after me, and meet me on the street and everything that way, so people would talk—he never cared any more for society than a hog—why of course, I'd have had to give him something—to get rid of him—I guess he won't now though, it's been so long, and besides," with a grim smile, "it's almost gone."

Helen sat silent for a long time. No one could tell what was passing through her proud young mind, or what emotions it would bring up in her heart. This new and surprising knowledge had undoubtedly set varied feelings and emotions stirring in her nature; but what would be the outcome of it all.

It comes disappointingly—yet we must remember the proceeding and stronger emotions and experiences—causes, which have been at work on her, all her life—the result was not merely that of a day's experience, but rather an index of her training and her character.

Rising to her feet she began nervously pacing the room.

"Well, if he is my father, what can I do— What if Carry Brown and Mary Rolleston know it, or shall I

explain it all to them, tell them he is my respected father if he does drink, that he used to be in the penitentiary but he ain't any more, that he might claim me as his child, and might make you give him part of the property, only it being almost gone, you don't think he will? Shall I tell them that is the reason he knows me and stops to look at me—shall I tell them all that?" she asked, in tones of infinite scorn.

"Heavens no, child—what do you mean by talking that way; I would never have told you, if I had even thought of your telling anybody."

"Well, I must do something, or else quit school; everybody in my class knows about it and every time they see me, ask me how he's getting along. To-day that mean, hateful, Claude Sofer looked right at me and pretended he was taking a drink out of a glass and whispered, 'Have a beer,' so all the school could hear him, and they all began to laugh at me."

Mrs. Parker ground her teeth together. "Curse him—but you'll have to stand it; pretend you don't care. I had to stand it; I had to turn it off maybe with a joke, when I could have stabbed someone. Every time any one spoke about him I had to apologize for him and excuse him. I have been humiliated until I wanted to sink somewhere out of sight, and, sometimes when I had company or gave a dinner, I would have almost nervous prostration from fear that he would come in and make a fool of himself."

"Why do men have to drink and act so, why should he come around and disgrace us, when he's such a disgrace to himself?"

"I don't know child; he might have met you accidentally."

"Well then, to-night, he was coming right up the street again, just as if he were looking for me."

"Maybe his work, or something, takes him along there at just about that time every day; I wouldn't come home on that street."

"Huh— I don't believe he does any work— I wish he was really dead."

"Why, Helen Parker," cried the mother, even her cold nature startled by the tones of the daughter.

"Well, he might as well be; he ain't any good to himself nor anybody else; if he was like Clara Menthar's father, or Susie Hill's, why I could like him, but nobody could blame me for not wanting him to come near me."

"Yes, I know how it is, Helen, but we can't help it; I'll be thankful, heaven knows, if he don't come to the house, and you'll have to notice it just as little as possible, and say as little about it as possible."

"Oh, well, I can't—I know what I'll do; I'll see him myself."

"What for; what good can that do?"

Well, I'll tell him he need never stop me or speak to me again, and that he must keep away from us—I'll tell him something," with an indefinite, but energetic, air.

"Well, I don't know," replied Mrs. Parker, doubtfully. "You might get him mad at us and no telling what he would do."

"Well, I'll see him, anyhow; I'll risk it, and I'll

tell the girls that he was an old servant or coachman of ours, and that he was drunk."

Life did seem almost unendurable to Helen for the next few days, and bitter tears were shed, and often did her slight form tremble with suppressed rage, until, at last, she came to shun all her companions, to avoid even looking toward them. True to her purpose she kept on the lookout for him who had caused all this humiliation and pain, but he seemed to have disappeared, when, one morning after about a week had passed, she found herself suddenly face to face with him.

Coming so suddenly, her impulse was to dodge him and hasten on, but she checked it and stood before him with a queer expression on her face, of defiance and yet indecision. She had thought out what she would say to him; she would scorn and ridicule him; she would tell him how she hated him, but now, all this seemed to have left her.

"Why do you stand staring at me," she stammered, "What do you want?"

"I wanted to speak to you," he replied in a quiet, hesitating, voice, "You can't understand until I tell you— I am your father."

"Yes, you are my father," she repeated, in unsurprised tones. "My mother told me that about a week ago, but she also told me that we were separated forever."

"What—but I suppose she told you all?"

"Yes, and it made me proud to hear it, but anyone could almost guess it all by your looks."

"Yes," replied the drunkard, slowly, looking down

upon his sorry figure and back again to the beautiful, stylishly-dressed young girl. "You are like your mother, proud and scornful—and yet I cannot blame you—I should not have expected it."

"Should not have expected what, what did you expect?"

"Helen, I loved you when you was a child more than anyone else, we used to take walks together, and have fine times, then I had to leave you—but I have been thinking about you all this time, wondering how you looked and what you were doing; I knew how it'd be; I knew it was better for me to keep away from you, but somehow I couldn't help it, you was the only person I cared for and I wanted to know if you was thinkin' or carin' about me," and tears came into his eyes as he spoke.

Helen was affected by these words; he had loved her; she had never heard anyone else say that; he had shown emotion by his tears; that was undisputable, though had she heard it previously she would have denied its possibility; he had come back with a desire to see and talk to her and not with the despicable wish to humiliate her, but what could she do; there was a whole world between them—there was the ridicule and disgrace of the past week.

"Well, if I was your friend, mother ain't, you can't come to our house, and, as for meeting you on the street or anywhere, people make all kinds of fun of me; that's the reason I'm alone now; I can't bear to go to school because everybody is teasing me about—the way you looked at me."

The drunkard's head sank, his eyes dropped to the ground.

"Just like her mother," he sighed, "but you said, if you was my friend," he suddenly cried eagerly, "are you my friend, will you be my friend?"

For a moment she hesitated, the good impulses struggling with the evil, but pride conquered.

"No, and the reason I spoke to you was so that you would not stop me or speak to me again, or I shall be the laughing stock of the whole town."

"Good-bye, then," and, with a last look at her, he turned and went slowly down the street.

Helen gazed after him with some feeling of sorrow and pain; she pitied him; her conscience was protesting against such treatment of her father—but the reaction came sweeping upon her and she stamped her foot angrily, saying: "I'm glad of it, he has no business to disgrace me."

Imagine yourself, dear reader, an outcast of society, drifting anywhere, it makes no difference, with here a curse and there a jibe, no confidence in yourself, no one with confidence in you, no home with its wonderful influences, no regard for the opinion of men because you think they do not care, your friends just like yourself, no tie of stronger or truer friendship, no kind sympathy, as you take only as a matter of course, a conscience seared, a miserable, demoralized body, the burden of the miserable past upon you, and a dark outlook for the future, good pure thoughts almost out of your reach, impure conversation ever around you, a

terrible appetite—yea, a disease to conquer, a strong habit to break, only by a will weakened by constant defeat.

Then, through it all, somehow, a little light shining—a little ray of hope—a bright recollection—vanishing and yet persistently returning—at last submerged in despair. We might tell of the anguish and disappointment of the drunkard, we might imagine him desperate, with deeper hatred toward his fellow creatures, with utter hopelessness caring nothing, committing some awful crime, we could imagine him sad, weeping and despairing, and pity him—but pshaw—does a drunkard have such emotions, or what care we if he does; let us turn to brighter thoughts.

CHAPTER VIII

It was again evening of a beautiful summer's day, the small clock over the desk in the grocery store of Greene & Co. had chimed out the half-past five stroke, so Mr. Greene, closing his ledger with a snap, placed it in the safe, locked it, straightened up his desk, hung up a file of papers, gave some directions to the head clerk, and then put on his hat and started for supper. Just as he stepped outside, a man who was passing, stopped and grasped him by the hand.

"Well, Mr. Greene, it's been a nice day, hasn't it—it seems to me I haven't seen you for some time."

"Yes, it does seem, living only two blocks apart, that we ought to see each other oftener than we do, but I am kept so busy in the store."

"Yes, and so am I—Ah, there goes Ruxley in his new carriage, handsome turnout that, isn't it—did you ever hear what kind of a deal he made with his property up there?"

Thus they were engaged in conversation when the eyes of Mr. Greene's companion happened to fall upon the heading of a paper he held in his hand.

"Ah, some more temperance," he cried, in a tone not altogether free from irony.

"Yes, Mr. Thorne, that's a temperance paper; I wish all men like you and I, who do not drink, would read and think of some of these words and statistics, until they come to realize the awful curse of whisky."

“Well, drinking’s a bad thing, when you drink like so many men do, like hogs, but nearly everybody drinks some; now, there’s Nate Jones and Arthur Holmes and Mr. Brooks, as nice fellows as you could pick out and they all have their wine, and they think it’s all right, and I don’t see how any man could walk up to them, and say, ‘You’re doing wrong when you take a drink.’ ”

“No, all men are equal, one man has just as much right to say what is right and what is wrong, as another, and no man can presume to dictate to another, and indeed I don’t know how any of us would have known there was any moral distinction between one thing and another, but for the Bible and Christianity, and because we see that injury and discomfort are caused by some things, just as we feel hurt from touching fire; we have a conscience, but it must be trained to be available; it will not rebel against any wrong unless it has learned somewhere that it is wrong; the heathen, though they are not so ignorant and uncultured as we often think, do things without compunction that would greatly startle us.”

“Well, if men think drinking is wrong it seems to me they have been a long time finding it out, for they’ve been drinking ever since the first we know from history, and they’re at it yet harder than ever. I suppose people did not use to make so much fuss about it.”

“No, but, as a drop of the precious attar of roses is the product of bushels of rose leaves, so precious knowledge comes, each atom gained as the product of

countless lives. I think the world is yet young. Man turned in rebellion against his Maker and flew to do all that, which was against his wishes and so evil, and now God must patiently and individually teach by the examples and failures of men, since there are no other creatures, angels or devils, from which they would appeal to us. You know it was as a man and not as a God that Christ came to teach us, you know that the Old Testament is taken up with the examples of men."

"Yes, but now, as to this drinking, I don't believe even your Bible says anything against it."

"I cannot say that it does, specially, but this is how I figure that, Mr. Thorne. There were ten commandments given in Moses' time and I think if you will study them you will see that they denounced those things that would be wicked through all time, and they recommended those things that should always be helpful and good in all time, and to all classes and conditions of men. They did not denounce any crime peculiar to that time. They did not say, 'Thou shalt not dance,' because there are some dances that are all right and some places where it may be proper. They did not say, 'Thou shalt not go to the theatre,' because some plays may be helpful and in some later age they may be an agency of good. They did not say, 'Thou shalt not drink,' because there are so many kinds of drinks, and so many circumstances in which they are drunk.

"Even Christ drank wine at the wedding, just as he would drink coffee or cocoa in these days, because he saw that it was not hurtful to him as he drank it, and,

as it was then made, and it was no offence to his companions.

“Christ did not spend his time so much in denouncing the special evils of that day, the licentiousness, the cruelty, the oppression, he did not draw distinctions in the customs of this day, he did not give some special laws to India and Africa, he did not tell the Icelander how he must divide up the long frigid night into week days and Sabbaths, he did not try to regulate the doings, so far as we can see, of the people who shall live here in five thousand years, nor to define distinctions in their customs, of which we cannot conceive now, and yet, without doubt, they will find his sayings and his life, and especially his death as appropriate and useful to them as we find it in these days.

“Men of that time knew what was evil, or rather those things and only those things that they knew to be evil, were evil to them. They were quarreling over each other's actions, they were, some of them, very moral men, they had those old commandments but they needed something more, and the world needed some one or something to redeem it from its sin, so Christ came, and, instead of commandments from the Mount, he gave that sermon on the Mount, those wonderful blessings, those wonderful promises, those visions of higher, nobler things, those outlines of higher, richer, more beautiful virtue. He came to infuse love and fellowship, joy and humility into them. He came not in wrath against their sins, but to teach and unlift those hearts that governed their actions. He came with the noble, ethereal, spiritual life, serving and governed by

an Almighty and sympathizing God, to replace the cold, methodical, moral life, governed by the customs, vanities, opinions, and decrees of the proud selfish men of the time, or the wicked, debauched, ignorant life, governed by the lusts of the mind and the flesh.

“But you see what I mean; the Bible is a book for all time, and so it denounces those things that are to endure as long as time lasts, perhaps, and those things of which there can never be any question as to right or wrong, while at the same time it comes to every age, every country and every individual to stimulate their conscience and to guide them in every circumstance.”

“But now, Mr. Greene, I don’t want to be stubborn, but just to stick to this one case, I would like to know how the Bible would apply to these three men I spoke of, drinking, moderately and sensibly, as they do.

“Well, those three men are, as you say, nice, clever, big-hearted men, excellent neighbors and all that, and, as they drink moderately, I suppose you would not account those warnings ‘to be temperate in all things’ and ‘to be sober’ as applying.”

“No, sir, I don’t believe they would.”

“It says, ‘Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.’ It says, ‘Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise,’ and it says, ‘It is good neither to eat flesh, drink wine or do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or shall offend.’ And, right here, I would say this, if any one of those three men, drinking moderately, as they do, can raise

three sons without one and more likely two of them, going down to be poor miserable drunken wretches, I will cheerfully forfeit one thousand dollars, and I would give ten thousand, if you could search through their neighborhood, influential as they are, and not find one neighbor's boy who has been induced to drink through their influence and example. But greater yet to themselves personally are those words, 'Verily, I say, a drunkard shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.' "

"Do you mean to call those men drunkards, sir?"

"No, indeed, but it seems to me to be as bad for the man who says he can quit at any time, to drink, as for the poor diseased wretch who cannot help it; that these words would apply to the one as well as to the other. I have only given you a few words that might apply. I cannot analyze the Bible, but there is in it somehow and somewhere those words that lift a man clear above drinking, and those passions drinking induces. There is something entirely antagonistic between religion and the whisky and wine and beer of this day. I cannot judge another man; the consciences of those three men you spoke of, may possibly never question them, and if that is the case I would say, they are doing all right, but if I should only take one sup I would have sinned, because I would have had to override my conscience and my ideas of God's will in doing that. So many men go around puffing away upon their cigars, enjoying them and I do not say it is wrong for them, I even enjoy seeing some men smoke, but it does not seem right for me to do it with the ideas I have."

“Oh, well, you religious people have too high ideals,” replied the other, somewhat impatiently, “your preachers get up there with their beautiful words, and their love and charity and unselfishness, and sanctification, but when it comes right down to the point there aren’t many that live near up to those ideals—now I venture to say I’m just as honest and just as good a man as the majority of your church members, and I don’t listen to many of the sermons either.”

“What you say is true in some respects,” said Mr. Greene, slowly and thoughtfully. “There are many noble men and many noble efforts that we cannot see perhaps, and that we do see, and yet church people come far short of the ideals they listen to each Sunday. Christ’s coming was, besides the idea of atonement, to live a perfect man, and to give us an idea of how an ideal man should live, and his wish was that we should each one fill our position in life as he filled his at that time, so is it not right that we should often have that right ideal brought to us, though by comparison it shows us very faulty and misshapen, just as the mechanic will look often at his pattern while he is at work, until he has every detail and curve impressed upon his mind?

“Man is a weak creature, but I feel that their trying is recognized by God. You hire a boy in your store; he makes mistakes, he forgets things, he sometimes neglects, he may fail to please his customers sometimes, and yet, all the time you see he is honestly trying, that he is improving, that he gains from his

misdoings, and you sympathize with him, forgive and forget his shortcomings, and try to do anything that will help him along—and so I think He does with us.

“Christians must have a high ideal to be Christians, and everybody recognizes that; the outside, worldly, man, is always quickest to notice any swerving from it, and the toughest man in the city can tell you how a good man ought to act—but what of all that? Mr. Thorne, a man is fit to live in this world, only when he is what we call moral and when his actions are respectable and decent. He may not then have the least connection with the other world, and he may then be lost just as the miserable river bat whom he would not notice here.

“Salvation does not come because a man abstains from those vices that condemn him even before his neighbors. Religion is something that comes to a man from heaven, and a religious life is one that develops and strengthens it.

“You take a pig, and put it in your house, treat it like one of your children, wash it, keep it warm, feed it on the daintiest food, and then, when it gets big you turn it out and it will go grunting and rooting around, a pig, just the same, and so a man can never become religious until he gets religion and is changed by it.”

Mr. Greene, while speaking, had drawn a small Testament from his pocket and now he opened it seemingly at random.

“Just listen for a moment, Mr. Thorne, anywhere through here, ‘Wherefore, laying aside all malice and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil

speaking, as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious,' and here, across the page, 'For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps,' and here, 'For he that would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile,' and right above that, 'Finally be ye all of one mind, having compassion, one for another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous,' aren't those wonderful counsels? Now we turn over, here is the third chapter of Colossians. Just read that when you get home, won't you, Mr. Thorne," he cried enthusiastically, "that is fine, there are words for everybody there, until you come down to the last verse and it says, 'But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong, which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons.' These chapters are inexhaustible riches to the Christians, and wonderful joy in reading, and uncalculable inspiration, but I would say to you as I must to a profane, dirty convict, you must first realize and appreciate this verse, 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world,' how true that was, 'but that the world, through him, might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not, is condemned already,' etc."

"Well, perhaps, you mean all right, Mr. Greene, but

I think every man has his own way of thinking and a right to think as he pleases; I live each day just as it comes, and then, when I die, I expect to go where I'm sent, and try to make the best of it; seems to me I would hate to be planning and worrying all the time about the future, but I must go to supper now—will see you again," and with a bow he had gone.

"Well, Harry," said Mr. Greene, turning to a young man of perhaps twenty, who had been standing for some time at no great distance, listening to the conversation, "there's a fine man, an awful fine fellow; I've known him a long time. But there's the one great principle of life lacking," he continued with a sigh. "He has planned and worked until he has a beautiful comfortable home here, but he cannot seem to realize that, unless he puts forth some effort, eternity shall find him the most poverty-stricken tramp, in that knowledge and those riches that shall be precious there."

"Yes, sir, that's right," replied Harry. "I've been listening to your talk. I thought you wouldn't care and it did me good as your talks always do—but I wanted to ask you if you couldn't get Larkin or some one to take my place to-morrow. My mother—is very weak, and I thought I had better stay with her—I'm afraid she can't last very long," he faltered and tears came to his eyes.

"Yes, yes, I will get somebody, or, if I can't do any better I'll do your work myself," he replied kindly. "You needn't come back until you want to. Take good care of your mother and I'm in hopes she will get better."

"Yes, sir," and the young man started off.

"Harry, see here, if she needs anything, or there is any luxury that would please her, don't hesitate to get it; here is money."

"No," cried the young man, tears again starting to his eyes, "I'll have a-plenty now."

"Well, all right, rely on me; if you should want me, I will come."

CHAPTER IX

Time brings changes, three years have passed and Helen Parker is a beautiful, dark-haired, graceful girl of nineteen; she has finished her education and made her début into society in a manner that has pleased even her mother.

Somewhat of a musician, a good dancer, accomplished in all that goes to make up a society belle; reared as a choice hot-house plant, proud and self-possessed, yet without that coldness and diplomacy of the mother, changeable, emotional, impetuous, with a spirit not to be bound too closely by conventionalities, not to be restrained too closely, not following too closely some other accounted greater, but longing to lead. She was popular, her companions were of the élite of that vicinity, she was besieged with male admirers, her name found its way into the papers, and not infrequently coupled with that of her handsome, fashionable mother.

Ah—her name was Parker no longer; she had married again; people had been wondering for years why she did not; there had come out whispers, at uncertain intervals, of her engagement to Col. —— or Mr. So and So; there had been innumerable guessings, there had been theories thereof, absurd and impossible, there had been some jealousy, but suddenly, with a great flare there had come the announcement of the engagement of herself and Clarence Leigh.

As for herself, she would rather have remained unmarried; she knew she was the object of speculation and talk. She enjoyed the attention of different men, and then she had made such a failure before, its humiliation and gall had remained a powerful motive against a second choice of companions.

But now, a conqueror of all this had come, the near approach of real pecuniary embarrassment. As saving as she had been, the whole estate was gone, the cottage was mortgaged and she was in debt.

So, of course, her new husband was rich; he was also presentable in society, though somewhat gruff and stiff. He did not gamble or drink, and was ready to accede to her wishes. He had some pride and took some pride in her; what else could she desire? Had she not, this time, made a good choice? Was he not strong in those points in which the lawyer had been so miserably weak? It was true he was often grumbling and fault-finding at home; it was true he kept so tight a grasp on his money that even she sometimes despaired of getting what she wanted; but then it would last the longer and her late economy had prepared her for that; it was true he and Helen did not get along together, but then, pshaw—no man is perfect.

And now she had the fond ambition to see her daughter as well provided for—to see her united to Carl Brown—Brown, always the synonym of aristocracy and wealth—and why should she not; was not he one of her most ardent admirers; were not Browns willing; had she not plainly hinted it to Helen, without the least objection from her.

About eight one evening a carriage came dashing up before their home; a young man alighted—Carl himself, hastened up to the door and was admitted, then, in a few minutes reappeared, accompanied by Helen, dressed in a beautiful white gown, but with heavier wraps thrown loosely around her.

They were talking and laughing in low tones, and, entering the carriage, were whirled rapidly away, down one street and up another, until, at last, they stopped, the door was opened, and Helen was helped out.

“What a dark, dingy street,” she cried, with a short laugh, “and where, in the name of charity, is your ball, that we have come so far for?” she asked, looking around with some anxiety.

Her escort laughed. “Wouldn’t it be a joke now if we couldn’t find it; no, it’s right up those stairs; we will follow those people.”

“It isn’t a very nice looking place,” she ventured, “mamma had no idea it was way out here—I don’t know where it is—but then she wouldn’t have let me come, all right; I don’t care, I haven’t been to a dance for so long.”

“It’s not so swell as I have been in,” he replied, “but never fear, we’ll have plenty of good dancing, some lively music and a flush time. It’s a lark to get off sometimes where everything isn’t so nice and so stiff and everybody don’t know you; I’ve come here quite a little lately and I like it—have lots of sport—hello, Annie. Oh, I’ll soon make you acquainted.” So he rattled along merrily, and she fell in with his

spirit; yes, it would be a lark; she was the prettiest girl in the house and wore the richest, if not the most brilliant, costume. She was the admired of all those admired; she was as a queen beside some of them.

The hall was quite large and brilliantly lighted. The orchestra were already thrumming upon their instruments. Her blood began to tingle and surge with that excitement and joy that comes to a dancer from such music. The first set was just forming.

There were quite a few well-dressed women on the floor, some very showy but not so modest costumes, some wore very short dresses and some decollete. The gentlemen though mostly well dressed, had often strikingly dissipated faces. In the gallery around the room was a motley crowd of men, women and children.

But she only gave them a careless glance. Arthur Shipton and Claude Sofer, two dandies of aristocratic birth and of long acquaintance, came hastily forward and greeted them enthusiastically and from that time, her mind was fully occupied, whether she was swinging on the floor, or resting for a set.

They introduced her to a number of the girls, but she did not care to get acquainted with them and they paid no attention to her; so she divided her time wholly among her three admirers.

But presently she imagined she could catch a whiff of liquor from their breaths, and, at length, when Claude Sofer came to dance with her the smell of liquor on him was unmistakable, his steps were less under control than formerly, while his conversation was of less sense and wandering. She noticed, too,

the effect of drink upon others about her; two men had begun to quarrel and swear and had been separated with difficulty.

At the end of that set she contrived to stop at the back of the room, and found there, sheltered by a sort of curtain, a regular bar where half a dozen participants of the dance were already slaking their thirst. Near by were men and boys and even girls in various stages of intoxication.

She had been used to the drinking of wine as it was sometimes served at the dances and in society. She had seen youths who were past knowing their own actions, led away. She had seen the faces of beautiful society belles, flushed. She herself had felt its confusing influence upon her brain, but this was so much different it shocked her, how disgusting some of these people looked—vile whisky and beer—how silly some of the men looked and talked, how bold and immodest some of the girls—there is one with her head lolling upon the back of her chair, her face wearing a silly smile, and several young men not much better off poking fun at her.

She looked hurriedly around for Carl, who was down for the next dance with her, but he did not come, so at last she yielded to Claude's entreaties and danced it with him. But still Carl did not come. She questioned Claude but he didn't know where Carl was and by gad he didn't care; he would dance the next round with her himself.

"No, I don't want to dance any more; I must go home right away."

"Pshaw now, Miss Parker," he argued, "It's too early to go home; we're havin' a fine time; now don't you think so—never enjoyed myself better, I'm sure—hic—and I know you'd enjoy yourself, too, if you'd just—uh—"

"Yes, you look like you were," she interrupted with great scorn, which, however, was lost on him. "But I'm going home; will you find Carl for me, or will I have to go myself?"

"Oh yes'm, cu'tenly; you want to see Carl Brown, huh?" and he started off, but coming back inquired hesitatingly:

"Ah—Oh, Miss Brown—wouldn't you like to have a drink—uh?"

Her eyes flashed fire and she stamped her foot. "No—you go and bring Carl right here."

He went off stammering something to himself and she was alone, until recognizing one of the girls to whom she had been introduced, she went and engaged in conversation with her, but all the while looking anxiously around for her missing escort.

At last she was overjoyed to see him coming toward her. Though he was badly under the influence of liquor, she hastened to meet him.

"Oh, Carl, this is a dreadful place; let us go home."

"Why, my dear, you are mistaken; this is a nice place—hic; a fine time; suthin' to drink, all the girls are—huh—she's havin' a good time," as a couple came swinging against him, knocking him down on his knees.

"No, no," pleaded Helen, "come and take me home; you must take me; I don't know the way."

"Ha, ha, ha, that's a good joke on you, you better wait 'till I go then— Come on," he cried, "there they go, and we must be in it."

"You'll go with me then, wont you, and you'll promise not to drink any more."

How long that dance lasted Helen did not know, but it seemed an age of misery, her face was scarlet with shame from the actions of her partner and others who were intoxicated, but at last it came to an end, and she renewed her entreaties to be taken home.

"But is that blame coachman come yet—how d'ye 'spect me to go home now—'tain't late yet."

She hastily looked at her watch; it was an hour yet until the appointed time for their return; she looked about her horror stricken. She could not spend another hour there, before that, Carl would be helpless, even now she shrank from going home with him, but what else could she do; she could see no friend; her other two acquaintances were just as bad.

The orchestra starts up, Carl pulls her by the arm. "You must dance some more with me," he cried, with drunken stubbornness.

"Let go my arm," she replied with blazing eyes, "you drunken wretch, how—"

"Now, you look out," came in drunken accents from Claude Sofer, who had just then approached, "she wants to dance with me; she said so, now; jus' go 'way now an' leave us be," and, to Helen's horror he grasped her other arm and began pulling her in the opposite direction.

By a great effort she jerked loose and gave him such

a slap across the face that it almost blinded him. He came at them with fury, his confused brain somehow attributing the blow to both of them, and began striking savagely and indiscriminately at one and then the other.

Instantly, the two men were fighting furiously and Helen was between them. She had received a stunning blow upon the cheek, but now she was knocked down and they were trampling upon her limbs, her dress catching in their feet was torn, one eye was blackened, another man was trying to separate them when his partner, a red-haired Irish girl, probably from jealousy, that he should try to help another girl, joined in the scuffle, and altogether, it was becoming a very serious matter for her.

But, suddenly, she was relieved of the weight upon her and was lifted in some one's arms and carried as though in a dream, out through the pressing, jeering, shouting crowd, out of the room and down the stairs, and there stood upon her feet, gasping for breath and from pain.

"Oh, my child, why did you come here; why do you go with such—fellows; are you hurt badly; can you stand?"

It was her father, more ragged and tougher looking than ever, and he had evidently been drinking, but there was in his look, affection and solicitude.

She was bursting with rage at the treatment she had received and it came out like a torrent upon him who was nearest, and him who was least deserving.

"You," she panted, "dare you ask me why I come

here; why are you here? Dare you choose my company; it all came from that cursed beer," and she stamped her foot savagely. "How I hate it—but you drink it; you're no better; you cannot talk."

"No," he replied sadly, "but I can warn you against such young men; they have taken the path I took; they are worse than I was at their age; you are ashamed of me, you will come to hate them."

"I hate them now," she broke out, passionately, but what a further reply to this would have been it is hard to say, for just then the uproar above ceased, the door opened and her escort came stumbling out, bare headed, his face scratched and bleeding, his clothes torn and dirty.

"Where ish my girl; where did she go," and then, catching sight of her, he began to yell and whoop like a wild Indian and started down the steps, while the crowd above came pouring out after him.

"Save me," she cried in despair, and, turning, fled down the street into the darkness.

The howling stopped suddenly and she could hear the dull thud of the body of the drunken youth as her father felled him with one blow, but she did not turn. There was a cab coming down the street, if it was only unoccupied; she ran out and stopped it.

The cabman looked at her searchingly and suspiciously by the light of a distant street lamp, but, as she produced the fare, he assisted her inside and said nothing, while she sank back upon the cushions with her heart beating like a trip hammer.

CHAPTER X

To Helen it seemed as though this fateful night was a sort of turning place in her life, that it had opened up and caused a world of bitterness and misery.

Her mother, who had not been at home at the time of her starting but who had given her consent to Helen's going, somewhat carelessly, relying upon the presence of Carl Brown and those he had mentioned who were going, as sufficient guarantee of an aristocratic ball, was terribly angry, but her chiding was met with a cyclone of wrath.

Tears did not come to soften Helen's bitterness as they would have to so many young girls; she did not give way to lamentations, to expressions of indignation, or to threats, but, from that time, a hatred inexpressible and seemingly unquenchable had come between her and those who had so roughly used her.

And so, as the next day she lay stiff, sore and bruised, each throb of pain seemed to increase the fury within her, and, when her step-father had ventured a word of reproach in her hearing, it seemed as though the greatest depths of scorn and venom in her nature had been aroused, so that for the time being he had retreated, slinking away from her blazing eyes as he would have from an enraged tiger.

But he was a stubborn old man and he made it very unpleasant for her; they had never liked each other, but now he was her eternal enemy, and, as the days

passed Helen was sometimes almost frantic, as at meal times he would sit regarding her with lowering, frowning brows, and puckered tightly-drawn lips, or at some remark of his as to her actions, or perhaps, as to some remarks he had heard upon the street, or some inquiry he had had as to how she was getting along, or if she had been seriously injured.

A sensational paper of the neighborhood of the hall had, in some way secured her name and had filled column after column with a most exciting and distorted account of the scrape, other papers had commented upon it, and, of course, it was the scandal of society, if not of the whole city.

Eager reporters had come flocking to the house but her mother had met them with a reception of such frigid coldness that they were glad to flee, and to rely upon their imagination for further details. Innumerable callers had come; but for once her mother's firmness and self-possession seemed to have deserted her, and she would not see them.

It was concentrated bitterness to her; it was worse than a drunken husband and a forger; it had irreparably and forever killed her plans for her daughter; it had banished all her dreams of the influence that would come to them through and because of the fascinations and beauty of the daughter; it somehow seemed to bring the realization that the burden of society had fallen heavily upon her, and that she was not able long to uphold it, and so as many a less-plucky woman would have done long before, she wearily dropped out of the race and staid at home.

But that home was a scene of discord and unhappiness; the mother was cold and distant toward Helen, and sat brooding over the misfortune and disappointment of life, or perusing some novel. Clarence Leigh, buying all the papers he could get his hands on, was continually showing her some account or clipping from them, of the affair, and, of course, this did not tend to soothe either her feelings, or the hatred of the daughter.

So life was truly unendurable to Helen and she often wished she was dead; she lounged around the house reading novels until the letters swam before her eyes, and she grew weary of them; their bright romances, their varied experiences, their platonic friendships and triumphing heroines, only made her life seem drearier and more miserable—sometimes she sat down at the piano and played a few pieces, sometimes it seemed she had nothing to do; she could only sit and rock back and forth and try to find the mental and physical rest from a sort of unconsciousness of the world and the passing of time.

But what a busy organ the mind is: if not occupied with new thoughts it is continually bringing up the past; it does not rest, and, sometimes, it seems that our efforts to suppress it only stir it to greater activity.

And so the scenes of that distasteful night kept recurring with remarkable persistency, and she was often troubled by that sad face of her father. She hated everybody she knew, but her antipathy for him had lessened somewhat as she came to detest so many others. In comparing him, as people unconsciously do

in such cases, with her step-father, she felt far more kindly toward the former. She did not admit to herself that she thought the least bit more kindly or favorably toward him, that her disgrace and separation from society had led her in the least to sympathize with him; she did not feel grateful to any one in the whole world; but still, there were sometimes twitchings of conscience to trouble her, as she thought of him.

His earnestly spoken warning kept returning to her mind. The appearance of her drunken pursuer with the eager, excited, crowd, just behind, and those gloating, devilish yells, and then that last interrupted cry, and that sickening thud—she almost wished it had killed him; but no, he had even come to the house and tried to see her, since that—she could not express her hatred of him—if there was any gladness in her life she was glad for that blow, and she was glad—she must at least admit that it was fortunate for her—that her father had happened to be there, that night.

Dancing, the mere thought of which had once sent a thrill through her slender frame, was disgusting to her now; the thought of liquor was sickening; the attention of young men of her set was impossible, to say the least. Her late brilliant entry into society, and her plans and expectations seemed of no interest to her now. They had all been strangely blighted by that one miserable night. Society events passed unnoticed or with only a scornful sneer, from her pretty lips. People, perhaps, were watching for her, looking curiously at the house as they passed; she would not gratify them, she would not even stand at

the window and at the announcement of visitors she locked herself in her room.

She had always admired her mother; so beautiful, and well-dressed, so graceful and unembarrassed, so sagacious and witty, qualities which elicited admiration rather than love. She had looked upon her as a sort of model, she had looked to her for advice in those matters of etiquette, good taste, style, which are indispensable to good society. Her instinctive ambition had been to equal or even surpass her as a society light.

But now that she had come in contact with her pride, her cold, disagreeable, unaffected nature, that artificial, brilliant, pleasant manner seemed hypocritical and disgusting. She no longer cared to imitate or please her; her admiration was gone and love had not come.

One night an idea came into her head. She would run away; she would leave that part of the city and go where she was not known; she did not care where. The thought staid in her mind and grew stronger; she would like to be a stenographer; how nice it would seem working, perhaps, for some nice young man, no detestable step-father or mother, or anyone else to find fault with her, no hateful society to bow to and to please. She had often watched them at their work, how independent they were.

One morning after an unusually bitter quarrel she announced her determination to leave home and support herself; she would not put up with such an old miser any longer, meaning, of course, Clarence Leigh.

Her answer was only a taunt from him and a sneering smile from her mother.

That settled it. Packing up her individual things she hastened to a jewelry store and disposed of one of her most valuable ornaments, a pair of diamond earrings and a beautiful pendant. Then she made her way directly to a school where stenography was taught and bargained both for a term's tuition and a room.

This done, she sent a man for her things and spent the rest of the day in arranging them cozily, just as she wanted them, and when, with a sigh of weariness, she had finished, the room was very well furnished; indeed, she had to do a great deal of planning to get everything inside; the room was so woefully small.

She had a small table in the center of it, and there was only a circular path of emptiness around it to walk in, but, as Helen sat luxuriously rocking and kicking her little feet into the air, she only laughed and joked to herself because of that. She had begun a new life, and, for a while it seemed very pleasant; she was independent; her work kept her thoughts from the misery of the past; she had escaped from that bane of society; intercourse with new friends and their sympathy and help were doubly pleasing to her; because of her recent banishment and exclusion from human beings, the atmosphere and society of the school was quiet and well-governed, and last, but not least, was the thought that she had further humiliated her mother and piqued her step-father.

She was bright, she learned quickly, but she was pretty, coquettish and lively again, as she had been,

and so she was a favorite of those boys who were taking the school easy, who were enjoying themselves as they went along; so it was, that while the plain, poor, but ambitious girl was sitting steadily bent over her book, she was smiling, winking or writing notes. While others were busy clicking away upon their typewriters, she was often slyly talking upon her fingers. When she tried to concentrate her mind upon her work it was often occupied by the events of the school room about her or in thoughts of some anticipated pleasure, or perhaps she was weary and sleepy from the late hours of the preceding night.

For she often went to the theater with Charley Brooks, and she had even gone to a dance with him, and enjoyed herself, too. That old untiring longing for pleasure, that never-satiated thirst for change and excitement, which she had thought so thoroughly destroyed, was again awakened and revived. Her pleasures were poorer and cheaper, her seats in the theaters were less costly. She must mix with society less fashionable, poorer dressed, more ignorant, but she did not care for this. They were not so despicable in her eyes now as those elegant richly dressed devotees of fashion, whom she recognized as of the class she had just left, and who, especially if they seemed to carry with them an air of proud aristocracy, always brought a sneer to her lips and a throb of hate to her heart.

Just so she could go, if not with Charley then with some other of the boys; if the company was less fastidious, less bound by petty conventionalities, so much

the better; they made up for it in earnestness and abandon to pleasure.

Yet, sometimes she seemed to have a fit of envy and dissatisfaction and disappointment and, at such times, she would buy the papers and eagerly read the society notes, and, as she read there those names which she knew, as she read the descriptions of the beautiful gowns, of the grand balls, of the brilliant receptions, it set her pacing her narrow little room in a fever of jealousy and regret and pain, sometimes impatiently kicking any of her innocent belongings that happened to seem especially obtrusive, until exhaustion would bring relief in the form of tears or sleep.

And then for days pride helped her to scorn all thought of them; there was an impassable gulf between her and her old position. She would not have gone back to the house of Clarence Leigh if the prospects had been ten-fold more alluring.

But now the end of the term had come and there were examinations and tests. Nervously, heroically, she worked, but still she failed in reaching the standard. She was not yet fit to go out into the work, nor could she yet hope to meet the rush of business or please an employer by neatness and accuracy, so her teacher told her.

That night she went home in that pitiable condition, which bitter disappointment, weariness, and the overshadowing of poverty, will bring to a nature like her. But, at the beginning of another term she started pluckily into the work again. Her room was not so crowded now as she had sold part of her belongings,

She had profited from her failure; she had been awakened to see that her wishes were not to be considered in this new life. Ability and competency were the only passports to her advancement and must be the sole means of her subsistence now; and, so she started in with the often-repeated determination to work steadily, to earnestly learn, and to faithfully practice. Charley Brooks had failed, and had left the school in anger, so it was somewhat easier for her; yet, the restraint upon her time and her unvarying hum-drum life became very irksome, and she came to look forward to the time, with horror and dismay, when, employed, she must work perhaps harder and more steadily.

One night she was on her way home when she happened to notice the sign, "CLERKS WANTED," in the window of a large department store near by. Turning back she entered the store and, almost before she realized it, had accepted a position in the ribbon department.

She wondered at herself, and at the sudden change in herself from a student to a clerk, as she came out and continued down the street. Her salary was to be small, but she would be relieved of all stress and strain of mind. She would not have to think or worry or pound an old typewriter all day, she would be meeting different people all the time and it would be nice showing those beautiful ribbons, matching colors and handling money,—yes, on the whole, she was glad she had made the change.

But there came in time the same old weariness and unrest, which we look upon as the result of outer sur-

roundings, but which more truly show the effect of inner conditions. It is true she had some irritable grumbling customers, but for the most part, they were kind and courteous. Sometimes she was confronted by one of her old acquaintances, but she always treated them as though they were strangers, and they generally did the same by her.

She had descended another scale in the social strata. She must look to these clerks for companionship. They were yet poorer, their knowledge was not above the ordinary and few of them were at all cultured or accomplished. Their tastes were lower, their language coarser and oftentimes contained questionable allusions and jests; their thoughts were grosser, they seemed more like animals—looking ever that they should get their feed and satisfied if they only got that—and she, thrown under the same conditions, and, in their company, would descend to the same level—well, she did not care.

This outlook and the daily restraint of work, was fast taking the aristocracy out of Helen and, alas—it was diminishing that true and right pride in herself—which is so strong a barrier against the debasement of character and that ambition and inspiration to be somebody, without which man is a poor creature.

So, with no restraining influence, she was going to the bad. She was getting used to their often almost disreputable talk. Surely John Oleson or that little simpering Henry Jones were no worse than Carl Brown. Although some of the dances she went to now were almost as bad as that fatal one, what difference

did it make. Some of the operas and shows were cheap and questionable, but she had no choice in the matter, she was only a store clerk about whom nobody cared—she was no longer a shining light whose actions were watched and commented upon.

CHAPTER XI

One evening she had started for supper, but she did not feel hungry; she would rather enjoy the comparatively fresh air of the street after the confinement of the day, and watch the countless human beings, hurrying and jostling along, each intent on their own supper or some pleasure or duty.

Some were as she had been six months before. She passed them with a sneer and a toss of the head. How well she remembered how, then, she had looked down upon the shop girl as only a sort of human machine, of no special value upon this earth but to sell goods. Many she could see were in the same position as herself, and there were some—worse—she pitied them. Why did they exist; how could they stand such existence year after year, and then came that old question to humanity, "Why do they and we exist anyhow?"

She wandered down one of the meaner streets. Here were children starting in life in woeful poverty, encompassed by sin and without ambition; yes, they must be, what good were they, what hope of them becoming anything. There's a dirty-faced little youngster swearing vigorously and trying to beat off a scrawny looking elder sister who has come to get him. There goes a man reeling in intoxication, and there a woman with a pail of foaming beer. There were men all along the street, lounging, smoking, whittling—

dirty, ragged and aimless. What is a man without ambition? But it flashed into her mind, was not that the bane of her present life. Formerly she had hoped to excel in beauty, in dress, and all that, to become a queen in society. Her one ambition had been smothered and there seemed to be nothing desirable now that she could ever hope to be or for which she was striving.

But listen, here comes the Salvation Army, the noise of the beating drum almost drowned in the chorus of indescribable yells and shouts from the crowd of grinning waifs of the streets—boys and girls of indiscriminate sizes and appearance. They stop just ahead of her. Men, women, and more children pour out of the dingy buildings, and immediately they are surrounded by a great crowd. Inspired by their eagerness, she pushes in to see them with the rest.

There were three men and four women in the little group; one of the men had the large base drum, another a horn and the third a large flag, some of the women had tambourines. They immediately struck up a lively song, accompanied by all the instruments and by clapping of hands; what queer people, what could they see in this kind of life anyhow, what did all this amount to?

Another rousing song was sung, one of the women had a particularly sweet voice, and a face beautiful and good, a clear, bright, pure face, with dark-blue eyes, a small dimpled mouth, and her waving brown hair showing under her poke-bonnet.

The song barely finished, all sank to the ground,

while one of the men poured out an earnest prayer; then, while yet upon their knees came a softly and reverently sung plea for the wicked. Arising, the man with the flag stepped forward and began to speak earnestly and in a loud voice.

“Friends, I wish you could realize that there is a God looking down into this street, that there are angels whose business it is to watch what each one of you are doing, and to write it down.

“He, who, innocent and pure, died to save men, wicked as they are, so that they might go to heaven when they die, is watching you all the time. If any of you children have not heard of this Savior who died for you, get your father or mother to tell you all about him, or come to the hall. I would be so glad to tell you all about it. Most of you have heard about it, most of you, I suppose, know all about it, but you do not pay any attention, you do not believe, you do not try to live according to what you know. Oh, that you could realize one hundredth part of his love and sacrifice for us—and yet, how we grieve him.

“As we came up this street we could hear cursing and swearing; you men, and even you little boys, reviling against the Savior, taking his name in mockery and he at the same time giving you air, and strength to breathe it; causing your heart to beat—some of these children, perhaps, have hardly known they had a heart beating away every minute, and that if it should stop—so long—their life would be gone.

“You do not realize that without life you could not

think, you could not move your hand, your arm, your head— Life comes from God, man cannot understand it, much less make it. All this time, by God's permission, your lungs are breathing, your heart is working, your blood is flowing through your veins, your food is changing into muscles and bone.

“Even as I speak, some guilty thief may be at work in yonder tenement. Would he be there if he realized that God was watching him? Would those men be drinking and carousing in that saloon over yonder? Would you, my brother and my sister, have done just as you did to-day? Would you have thought the same thoughts?

“Friends, God has wonderful mercy; he lets us go on here day after day, pleasing ourselves, stealing, fighting, lying, drinking, cheating, gambling, dancing, doing everything he has told us not to do, paying no attention to him except to revile and blaspheme his name. Could we treat a friend here on earth that way and expect to keep him a friend?

“Could you do everything opposite to what your father or mother wanted, without expecting to be punished? Can you do opposite to what the people want you to do, I mean by that break the laws, and expect to go unpunished? Can you jump from that high building without getting hurt?

“God said to the flower, be beautiful, that you may please men; to the tree, grow and be strong, spread out your branches that you may be a shade; and to man, he says, serve me continually and gladly. What is it prevents? Partly stubbornness, partly laziness and

partly because you have followed after sin and allowed it to conquer you.

“No, mercy will not last forever. Justice will find you. Hell is your punishment. Some of you laugh at the idea of a hell, that word passes through your lips a dozen times a day; carelessly, you joke about it. You say that hell would be too severe a punishment; that God would not allow it. But, friends, do you realize your sin as God sees it?

“Every hour you repel him, push him away, you are ungrateful and unthoughtful of his mercy, and of everything he gives to you. Instead of living for him, and trying to elevate each other into in a better life, into a better preparation for heaven, you are going backwards, you are growing blacker and blacker, you are dragging some one else down, maybe a wife or a child, or someone else. Do you want to see these little children grow up to be such lazy wretches as some of you are? You are serving the devil if not God.

“I do not say there is not a terrible fire awaiting the wicked; I think there is and I don't intend to risk it by going there. Never— But we will suppose there is no such terrible place; we will let you have it your own way. You are enemies to Christ, you want him to keep away from you, to leave you alone in your blackness and sin, and all Christian people, many of you make fun of them, it makes some of you mad if you see anything that is good. Well, we'll let you have your own way then.

“At the Judgment Christ leaves, withdraws, from

you; the good people will not bother you any more. They have gone with him. Some of the rich respectable people will stay with you because they did not like God. Some of those who have been coming to our meetings or to church and who you have been laughing at for trying to be good, will leave you.

“Some of you think: Oh, well, I will live wicked here, do just as I want to, and then, just before I die I’ll repent, and so I’ll go with the good people. No, you won’t; nine to ten chances you won’t. You’ll be ashamed to; you won’t want to then, and you must be forgiven, and washed whiter than snow before you die. You say you are ashamed to go to church because your clothes ain’t so nice as the others. Well, in the judgment you’ll be a hundred times more ashamed of your dirty black sins amongst the pure and righteous. You don’t like to look a real good man straight in the eye and their talk makes you ashamed of yourself. Do you think you will push in amongst those good people then? Do you think you would stand up in front of Christ without flinching? No, I think you will sneak away; you will get in amongst the other crowd, you will stay with the devil who you have been serving so long.

“I don’t think there’ll need to be angels there to keep you back; I don’t believe anybody will have to separate you. There’ll be nothing hid there; we’ll not have these bodies to hide us from each other. To my mind some of us will be as clear as crystal—shining, beautiful; some of us stained, blackened, clouded over horribly. When the great book of Judgment is opened,

he wont have to call off where you'll belong—no, you'll be there already and some of you will be trying to hide yourselves, too—but, when your name is called you'll step out in front, you'll have to, and the record will be read of what you have done. They have only to look down at your black body. Even the devil will say, the record is true; you will know it is: you will crowd back out of sight.

“So, at Judgment you will be promoted to steadier employment and bigger pay, whichever side you are on, just as death finds you—whether it is the devil or God that gives you up and ceases to strive with you.

“And, do you think you would be happy then, when you're desire was granted and all good people had gone? Suppose this street was shut up, no good person could come in here. You never heard anything good from outside; you lived here, on and on for a hundred years, yes, a thousand years, wouldn't this be a hell right in here. Why, look at yourselves, some of you thirty and forty years old, scarred by sin, miserable, tired of existence, some of you drinking to forget your misery, some of you committing suicide to escape the wretchedness of your life. What would you be in a hundred years from now, and there is a whole eternity before you, thousands and thousands of years? Oh, it would be worse than fire and brimstone. If you go to hell you will never escape. Oh, won't you begin to serve God to-night?

“I know you are surrounded by evil things, by misery and poverty and temptation, but, if you will just ask his pardon, ask him to forgive you for the way you

have treated him and determine to do better the rest of your life; he will help you—we will help you.

“He is watching you—anxiously—no matter if you are a drunkard, a thief, a murderer, or a liar, or maybe you are more respectable. You would not do any of these things, you are selfish, your heart is filled with anger and hatred, your mind often filled with evil thoughts, you do not care to know God, you are miserable and discouraged, you do not care what becomes of yourself or anybody else; it is all the same, you are a sinner and you need God, and he is ready and waiting to receive you.

“Now, in just a few minutes, I want to ask you to accept this salvation, but first Miss Ames will sing for you a song, ‘The Sinner’s Friend.’ I am sure you will be glad to hear her.”

Miss Ames was the girl whose face had attracted Helen’s attention, and accompanying herself now and then with her tambourine, she sang the realistic and touching song in a clear, emotional voice.

What a voice! It would have been almost a passport into society, at least a means of distinction there, but she used not the least affectation, she sang not to show it, but to express meaning, a song from the heart and so, going to the heart. As it was finished she stepped back, modestly, with downcast eyes; no applause, nothing but a breathless silence, but yes, the highest tribute that could be paid—women are weeping. Helen was greatly affected, she had listened breathlessly.

“Captain Jones, how is it with you to-day?”

That individual, an old man with white locks, steps out and tells how for forty years he has been a happy man—because—for that length of time he has been a Christian. How, since he had joined the Army, he had been happier than ever, and that he expected to be happy as long as he lived.

“Hear that?” cried the leader, “he says he has been happy forty years. How many of you can say that, I wonder? No, you cannot be happy and live in sin. I know that because I have tried it, but I am happy now—hallelujah—all of us are happy, Miss Ames is happy, Comrade Holmes is happy, you may be happy to-night. Come, get into the fountain to-night. Now, while we sing let some one come forward, kneel down by this drum and get your sins washed away; let anyone come, it is for one as well as another.”

Again they broke into a wild, impressive refrain; two women, one of them with a white-faced little boy, came forward, a rough-looking old man, one scarred by poverty, drink and sin, fell upon his knees tears streaming from his eyes, and buried his face in his hands; a moment later a dissipated young man, ragged and with terrible despair written upon his white emaciated face, dropped by his side, amid hallelujahs and expressions of joy and praise.

Most of the Salvationists had dropped upon their knees to pray with and for the convicted ones, but one of the men, he who had been called Holmes, stepped forward and began to speak:

“That is right, my friends, keep on coming—hallelujah—won’t more of you come and be saved—now is a

chance—some of you ought to come, won't you? I was impressed by what our leader said about serving, that we are either serving God or the devil, and the thought came to me, we are all saving our wages, did you ever think of that?

"There is an expert workman; he should receive the wages of an expert. There is an ignorant, careless man, are not his wages in proportion. Are not your wages increased as time goes on and you become more skillful and more careful?

"This brother," and he laid his hand upon the head of the kneeling man, "has been an expert workman; he has served Satan long and well; he has received liberal wages for all his work. How do I know? Is it not discernable to you, my brother, my sister? May he from now on receive as liberal from God."

"Amen," came in a chorus from different members of the band while an enthusiastic sister shouted "Hallelujah."

"Young man, young woman, you too have received his wages. There are stored away, in your heart, maybe, pride and deceit; in your mind, maybe, impurity and hatred; in your soul, maybe, arrogance and defiance; in your body, maybe, disease and lust. Then, as your wages grow larger and your storehouse grows fuller, your riches may be seen through the eyes, the face, the body.

"But what are the wages of the Christian? Help in trouble, soothing of pain, encouragement after disappointment, happiness and blessings, above all, joy and peace, for ever and ever. He, too, saves his wages.

His heart may be stored with love and pity, his mind with good intentions, good and pure thoughts and knowledge of good, and his body, too, though it may become old and feeble, will show the wages of a good life's service.

"And, so as our comrade explained heaven and hell, I think in either place we go right on saving, our wages keep on increasing.

"You know how low a man can get here, you have seen men and women who it almost made you shudder to look at, whose lives seemed as black as midnight to themselves and everybody else. You have heard of such men and women killing themselves, though they know there is a hell waiting for them they feel that it cannot be any worse and it will be a change, but if a man can get so miserable, so terribly wicked, here on earth, with all the good people and with God watching him, can you imagine what he will be in a hundred years, a thousand years, or ten thousand, amongst all the scoundrels of this earth and with the devil and his angels for company and without any God to influence him?

"Friends, are you having a good time? Do your wages satisfy you? Do you want to go to that place of misery and sin? Do you want to spend eternity with drunkards, liars and devils? If not, come and kneel down by the side of this brother."

He dropped back to his place, there was a moment's silence, then the leader arose with the elder man; the others had already arisen.

Hallelujahs came from one and another, the big

drum was snatched up and joined in a song of rejoicing, while the faces of all the band shone with happiness.

Then, each of the converts spoke a few words of the great change in them; was it not a miracle. Helen looked into their faces curiously. At that last invitation she had had a strong and almost uncontrollable inclination to join them by the big drum, but the minute had passed and the chance was gone, the meeting was over and the leader giving an invitation to all to come to the hall.

She turned to look at Miss Ames, her face looked more beautiful than ever; it shone, she was smiling, her eyes glistened.

The big drum struck up, the line quickly formed and they were gone. She gazed after them as they marched, with their peculiar long, undulating stride, two of the women thrumming upon their tambourines, the four new converts with the little boy running by his mother's side, close behind, a short interval, and then the motley, wretched crowd—and tears came to her eyes.

They were gone—she had forgotten herself and all else and now, with a sigh, consciousness of herself came back to her, she must go back to work. As she turned her eyes encountered a face, questioning and yet hopeful, a face full of strange sympathy and emotion.

Its gaze was directly toward her, but now as she looked, it disappeared; was it the face of a man or woman; she could hardly tell, the features had been so subordinate to the expression.

CHAPTER XII

The "open air" of the Salvationists had greatly impressed Helen. The sweet calm face of Miss Ames, the plain dark face of the captain, the pinched, sin-scarred faces of the onlookers, the bowed forms around the old drum, and then their changed faces, which told the miracle of conversion stronger than any words, kept coming into her mind, but, more than all, that inquiring, anxious face kept haunting her. For a week she often found herself puzzling her brains over it, and trying to recall those features.

For the first time in her life she had been stirred religiously. She had often gone with her mother to a certain very fashionable church, but had had about as much religious thought awakened there, as at other times when they visited the theater together.

But now, these plain-spoken words somehow had gone straight to her heart as the truth. That dark-faced, earnest-speaking man had not been telling some great lie, nor Miss Ames. It had instigated comparisons between those Army lassies and herself—their happiness and hers, their usefulness, their aims and expectations. It had led her to look upon herself and inquire: what was the use of her living—only a matter of accommodation, to match and measure off fine ribbons for the fine ladies, and to turn the bulk of her wages over to her landlady, who accepted it so com-

placently—to inquire if it were possible that this uneventful, wretched life had all this time been leading her to, that each day was bringing her nearer, another world and death, how awful it seemed to her.

One night she picked up a Bible and found herself reading from it, here and there a verse. With a contemptuous smile at herself, marvelously like her mother's when the subject was brought up seriously, she laid it down, and turned to her paper-covered romance; how much more interesting.

One Saturday night she was leaving the store with the other clerks when a young man in the crowd pressed a card into her hand. She did not look at it, she was watching his face; it was the same, which had been puzzling her so of late.

She watched him as he unobtrusively handed cards to several others and then turned and came up the street toward her, she felt an irresistible impulse to speak to him and slacken her speed that he might overtake her, but he was a stranger, what could she say to him?

She looked down at the card, she would ask him some question about it. It was an invitation to Special Meetings at ——— Methodist Church. On it were several Bible verses and the pastor's name.

He was just behind her. "Please, sir, when do these begin?" she asked, holding up the card.

"The date is on there—next Saturday night and at 7:30 each evening; see the fine print down at the bottom."

"Oh, yes, sir," and then they walked along a little

way in silence, he seeming undecided whether to continue in conversation or to resume his former pace and leave her behind.

But Helen's curiosity was aroused.

"You—you aren't—I was going to ask if you was the preacher, but you are too young," and she laughed confusedly.

"Oh, no," he replied, smiling, "I am a clerk in Rich, White & Hall's."

"Why is that so; where at; what part?"

"Hat department; second floor."

"You haven't been there long?"

"No, only a week."

"I'm in the ribbons, first floor; I hadn't seen you before—except—"

"You saw me watching you the other night."

She did not ask when nor why, but simply answered, "Yes."

"I suppose you thought me impolite, or, at least, queer?" he asked, "but I saw you were interested and I was so anxious that you should become a Christian, I forgot myself."

She wondered at this remark.

"What! You mean that I should kneel down by that drum and join the Salvation Army?" she asked, doubtfully.

"Yes, that is as good a way as any, I guess, to begin, or, if you'd rather, join some church; this whole earth was made to glorify God in, and it don't make so much difference where you do it, as how."

"I don't—never—believed in such things," she

explained, "but somehow I was interested in their meeting. I never stopped to listen to them before—much. It seemed to me that that girl that sang alone was about the prettiest I ever saw, and I don't know why either, for I know I have seen prettier."

"She has a beautiful, good, face; she does more good in this world than a hundred common persons," he replied, enthusiastically.

"Do you know her?" she could not help asking. "She has a beautiful voice, I thought, and she seems so modest, too; she does not try to show it off."

"Yes, I never get tired of listening to her sing; I know her from going to their meetings, but only as a hundred others know her. I'm a great admirer of the Army," he continued, earnestly, "their ways seem queer, they sing funny songs and make lots of noise, but, back of it all, are hundreds of earnest, consecrated, beautiful lives, compared to which many of those who stand and jest and laugh, as they go by, are miserable nothings. I really think, if a test were taken of true courage, some of those Army girls would stand at the head, above the wonderful heroes the world makes so much fuss over—going down into the slums, anywhere, fighting crime and poverty, helping the sick, doing good wherever they can—no salary, no position to back them up, speaking to any one of their religion. For true boldness, I don't believe some of them can be beaten anywhere. I can't do that; I want to see people saved, I would like above anything else to be the means of saving them, but, as for going to some of the people they do, it seems like I could

no more do it than I could fly—just in distributing these cards I pick out those who I think won't laugh at me, and yet I despise myself for my cowardice."

"You thought I wouldn't laugh?" she asked, glancing over at him with a queer expression on her face.

"Yes, from the interest you showed the other night. Some of the girls don't seem to know they have a soul; I pity some of them—but I wish you would keep thinking about this. Go to the Army meetings when you can, and come to these meetings at our church. I will tell you, a Christian life is the best way to live here and then you are ready to die any time, you can be sure of a better world ahead— Well I must go down this street—I will see you again. The boss told me to-night that I would go down into the shoe department next week."

"Oh, you will take Carr's place; yes, that's not far from me."

Strange thoughts filled Helen's mind as she went on to her room; what a strange young man, a religious young man; she had never met one before that she could remember of; she had hardly believed there could be such a young man as she had just met, that talked of religion and thought so much of the church and Salvationists. She had not, for a moment, doubted the sincerity of his words; the hypocritical do not talk as he had, and their words somehow cannot make the impression that his words had made upon her.

But she would see; she would study him to see if there was really anything in religion—but pshaw, and she made a hasty review of her past

"I should think there 'ud more believe in it. As long as I've lived I never had anything to do with a young man that pretended to be religious; some of 'em go to church sometimes, but only because it was some place to go; my mother went to the ———— sometimes and I went with her, but if that was being a Christian I don't care to be one," and her lips curled in scorn, as they always did at thought of her mother.

"But even if he was a Christian why should he try to get other people to be; how strange that these Salvationists should work so, and why should it make them so happy to have such poor miserable drunken converts?

"Even if she could become a Christian she didn't see why she need go around pleading with others; they had the same chance; they could be Christians if they wanted to; she wouldn't go to a person only to be laughed at, to be met with ingratitude and disdain—not she."

But her ears still rang with the earnest praise of this strange young man—of the courage and goodness and unselfishness of the Salvationists—how her opinion of these people had been changed in the last week! She could not help thinking, too, of her father; how she had despised him, and of the sharp contrast between her attitude toward him and their unselfish labor for and welcome of those as bad or worse than he who had no ties of friendship or relationship—and her conscience hurt her.

But why—why all these comparisons, these thoughts, this change of view; why this rehearsal of her past

life; why this examination of her present conditions and aims? She did not know—she had talked five minutes with a young man, whose name she did not even know—she had listened a half-hour perhaps to a band of Salvationists—that was all—everything else about her was just the same.

Time went by, the young man came down into the shoe department and she had plenty of opportunities for watching him, but he seemed very quiet. He rarely spoke to her only as a greeting. He was very different in manner from the other male clerks. He was polite and painstaking with his customers. He was continually giving out those cards and had been heard talking religion with some of his customers. Some of the girls had told her about it, with much giggling—which, somehow, had jarred on her as unpleasant. But, above all, she noticed that very often he was watching her—sometimes with admiration but more often with a questioning and undecided expression.

The proprietor of the store had set aside a room in the basement for a lunch room and here the clerks were wont to gather in sections, to engage in conversation and enjoy a brief relaxation while appeasing their hunger.

Harry Spencer, for that she found to be his name, ate at the same time as she did, but always sat at some distance from the others, watching them, taking little part in the conversation, laughing with the others at times, but sometimes turning his eyes away in seeming aversion or displeasure.

Sometimes he would seem greatly amused by little Mertie Jones, a golden-haired, blue-eyed, shallow-brained creature, who could go on indefinitely, telling of her latest fellows, her dresses and bonnets and gloves, always talking, always lively, never a sober thought; sometimes he seemed to weary of her endless chatter, sometimes he seemed to pity May Patterson, who was always quarreling with the boys and whose whole idea of conversation seemed to be in exchanging jibes.

Helen often glanced at him to see how he was regarding them, and somehow felt that he was watching her more than the others, though he always averted his eyes when she looked toward him.

This surveillance acted differently upon her at different times. Sometimes she would grow silent if not thoughtful, sometimes she would try to forget him, and yet all the time having that uneasy sensation one has when the object, or the fancied object, of scrutiny. Sometimes she did not care or else, rebelling against the strange influence, would become the gayest of them all.

One day she seemed to have a specially strong inspiration to mischief; catching one of the boys by the arm, she pulled him out into the middle of the floor and they began a lively waltz up and down the room, with extravagant gestures, he swinging her clear of the floor at the ends. Quickly another couple joined them, then others until all but Harry and one of the girls were whirling on the floor. She had been afraid to ask him and he had not offered his hand, but

sat gravely eating his dinner, though there was a perceptible flush upon his cheeks.

Presently they stopped and came back laughing, to their unfinished dinners, and several immediately began to make sport of him for his bashfulness, backwardness or incompetency, according to which they thought the cause of his failure to join them, but he only answered their jests and taunts by the words, "I never danced."

This caused pretended horror and questions as to where he had been brought up, etc., until Helen, jumping up, began to sing a song she had heard at the theatre the night before, imitating also the motions and swagger of the stage beauty whom she had heard.

She was given loud applause and thus encouraged gave them an entertainment after the manner of the popular song and dance artist, and with such a vim and spirit that there many exclamations of surprise, when she had finished, and little Mertie came running to congratulate her and to assure her that she must certainly go on the stage.

But she had caught sight of his eyes upon her, watching her, and her scarlet face, which her friends supposed came from her exertions, was rather the result of a sensation of shame that came over her, and, sitting down, she quietly finished her dinner in spite of the protests.

But, having started this form of amusement, it did not stop so easily. It was a delight to the boys, and others of the girls were willing to please them, so one after another of them contributed some popular ditty

or some new dance and it is needless to say, expressions came from their lips that it were far better had been left unsaid, while movements were executed which are generally supposed to be left entirely to the professional actress.

Some of the quieter of the clerks began to make objections and to shame some of the participants, and, strange to say, Helen, toward the last, joined in with them. She had been watching and comparing the actions and attitude of Harry and those of Tom Jeffries, John Oleson and some of the other male clerks. They had been cheering and inciting the girls to greater efforts, and, upon their faces, was the expression of sensual pleasure. He had seemed shocked and saddened by their recklessness and abandon.

As they went back to their work Helen felt an impulse to speak to him, to show him in some way that she was sorry for what she had done, but she could think of nothing she could, or that she would, say. Anyhow, she wasn't going to apologize to him; she could do as she wanted to, and again she wondered why she cared so much for his good opinion—and so she passed him with assumed indifference, though, as if compelled, she could not help but catch his glance, as though he sought to read her thoughts.

CHAPTER XIII

As the days went by, time somewhat deadened the stirring up, the almost upheaval of thoughts, ideas and conscience, that had come from the Salvationists' meeting, and it would have soon become to Helen and uninfluencing, if not a forgotten, event of the past, had it not been for Harry Spencer.

But he had become a sort of daily exponent and reminder of religion to her. She often wondered, as certain events or thoughts came to her, how he would look at them from his standpoint. She was still often trying to recall and puzzling over that expression, that had so affected her that night, or, often when unoccupied, that quiet, pure face of Miss Ames, would come creeping upon her memory, and sometimes, in unexplainable contrast, beside it would appear the gaunt dissipated features of her father. She would find herself wondering about the wages of good and evil, or picturing, with vivid grotesqueness, that idea of hell where all the wicked should be gathered together, and those that reject Christ.

Sometimes, when upon the street, she would look about her and think of the God above, looking down. How impossible it seemed that a Savior was watching it all from above, and longing to be, as the Salvationist had said, a friend to everybody! How near and real was all the sin and ignorance and poverty of the city! There was a slouchy little newsboy, and there a

dirty-faced bootblack; they had probably never heard of him. There is a butcher chasing and swearing at a dog, there a coachman lashing his horses. Did he realize he was mistreating a creature of God's, before his eyes? There goes a ragged, ugly, negro and there an ink-splashed printer's devil; there a sailor, by his gait, and there a flashily-dressed woman hurrying along; there a drunken tramp and there a fat, white-aproned bar-keeper. Multitudes are coming and going, street cars are full, hacks are flying around, bells ringing and whistles blowing, yet she could not see one who she thought was thinking about Christ; she could not hear anyone talking about him. All were busy concerning this earth and perfectly unconscious of an invisible Friend.

But against all these doubts—or not doubts, for she had never been convinced—but against her unbelief there was, besides the talks and testimonials of that “open air,” the testimony and presence of this religious young man, a yet stronger evidence and one that she could not explain away.

It was Saturday night again, the only night on which he was relieved at the same time she was, and they walked down the street together as before.

“Oh dear,” commenced Helen, “hasn't this been a mean, hateful, busy day?”

“It was a little warmer and less windy than yesterday, I believe,” he replied with a smile.

“Oh, well, I didn't mean that; I meant in the store. I get so tired and hot that I can hardly answer people decently, and it seems like, always on our busiest

days, I have some of the worst customers, that stand around and look and look and plan over and explain, where they can use this ribbon or that, or where some will show off the best, and they ask foolish questions, or maybe try to haggle you down on price— I get so tired of it some days [with a forced laugh] that I most wish I was dead.”

“You must have had a blue Saturday,” said Harry, laughing. “Well, I know how to sympathize with you, for I have a day now and then, when I’m discouraged and everything seems to go wrong.”

“Whew, it was so hot to-day, for a spring day,” continued Helen, “it made me think of Africa, and the more I thought of it the more I envied the Africans, just lying around in the shade, or going around anywhere they want to, in the fresh air and looking at the beautiful scenery, maybe going fishing. They don’t have to bother about clothes, and when they get hungry they can just pick some bananas or a cocoanut—and they have plenty of monkeys there to amuse them—my, wouldn’t it be fine.”

“I’m afraid you’d soon want to come back,” he replied, laughing at her half serious, half jesting air, “to the land of schools and churches, and fine clothes and ribbons; why, if one of those African girls could get hold of some of those fine ribbons you handle so carelessly, she’d be happy all the rest of her days, and if she could dress as you are now, she’d be the envied of all Africa.”

“Yes, I suppose so; I used to think it would be great fun to sell ribbons, but I’m tired enough of it

now; it seems like I'd rather be anything else, from a Zulu girl to a Greenlander."

"Anything for a change of country—well, there is a country that I have heard a good deal about, that I want to go to, the fact is, I'm planning to go there, now."

"Why, is that so; when are you going; is it in Europe, France; oh, I'd like to go there."

"No, it's not there, and I hardly know when I will go, but here's the descriptions of the place," and he drew a small book from his inner coat pocket. "You've seen me reading from it, I expect. Whenever I get a blue day like you had to-day, I just read in it and it cures me every time. It gives me patience to work here a little longer."

"Why, it's music," cried Helen.

"Yes, it's a hymnal."

"There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign,
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

There everlasting spring abides,
And never withering flowers.
Death, like a narrow sea, divides
This heavenly land from ours.

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dressed in living green.
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.

Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore,"

"That is beautiful," said Helen.

"Yes, let me read part of another, the next one."

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wistful eye,
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie.

No chilling winds, or poisonous breath,
Can reach that healthful shore;
Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more.

There is an hour of peaceful rest,
To mourning wanderers given.
There is a joy for souls distressed,
A balm for every wounded breast,
'Tis found above in heaven.

There is a home for weary souls,
By sin and sorrow driven,
When tossed on life's tempestuous shoals,
Where storms arise and ocean rolls
And all is drear—'tis heaven.

There is a land mine eye hath seen,
In visions of enraptured thought,
So bright that all that spreads between,
Is with its radiant glories fraught."

"And now here's one more and a favorite."

"Far from these scenes of night,
Unbounded glories rise
And realms of joy and pure delight,
Unknown to mortal eyes.

Fair land! could mortal eyes,
But half its charms explore

How would our spirits long to rise,
And dwell on earth no more.

No cloud these regions know,
Realms ever bright and fair
For sin, the source of mortal woe,
Can never enter there.

Oh, may the prospects fire
Our hearts with ardent love
'Till wings of faith and strong desire
Bear every thought above

Prepared by grace divine,
For thy bright courts on high.
Lord bid our spirits rise and join,
The chorus of the sky."

"That's the country I want to go to; I have no special ambition here and no special talent. I never expect to be rich, famous or good-looking, but I do want to be ready and prepared to go to that better land.

"You go to any place in this world and in time you would get tired of it; you know how soon any coveted possessions or position, when secured, gives way to something else you covet just as much, and how unsatisfying the world's pleasures are. Man is too big for this world. We were not made to work in a department store for all time."

"I should hope not," ejaculated Helen, fervently.

"No, I venture to say you and I will not work in one for even a hundred years—but really, Miss Parker, it is strange if we took the trouble to think of it, how just such work develops us and how soon we

get used to and careless of things about us that it would seem were wonderful enough to keep us interested. We come into the world babies in body—no strength, no skill, no knowledge, no ambition. We find that in the world which develops our bodies. We have something in us susceptible to practice so that we may become skillful. We have an instinct of imitation and learn to talk from hearing others. We see a scholar and want to become one. We see the advantages of a rich man and try to become rich. We go to school and learn rapidly so that we soon say we have had enough of that, we have learned all that we need to learn from such books. We go to work, say in a department store; we see and handle and sell the products of ingenuity, skill and capital but we come to think nothing of them. We see people of every sort of feature, voice and manner, but we come so soon only to look on them impartially and in a cold-blooded manner as customers; we say we are soon tired of it. We perhaps get a chance to travel about; it is pleasanter, but, queerly enough, we get tired of riding in the cars and we get tired of seeing so many people and hearing them talk, and our emotion or whatever it is that is pleased in a little while refuses to be very much stirred by anything new. People who follow pleasure and gratification become blase and weary and know not which way to turn. Religious people come to care little for this earth, only as it suggests to their minds a better place, and, as they think they see in it a needful place as a training school for them.

“So while men can in a way outgrow this world or

their place in the world it seems to me that if they have an ambition to do something they can make a good deal of life, and they can keep up an interest that will make life pleasant. We know of men who have studied, whose thirst for knowledge has never been satisfied and who wished for more time that they might study more. There have been artists and famous people perhaps whose ambition has not been contented with what they knew or had, but most of us are above such things. The great men you see are the servants and must work hard—but we common people cannot keep interested—we don't see the object in working so hard, we can't see the point, as they say, in learning so much. Well, perhaps we can have an ambition that is easier for us; we make up our mind we are going to be good. Perhaps we find that keeps us quite busy and we find something quite interesting in it, too. We've got some studying to do, to see what makes us want to do such mean things. We have to think some to see what is the best thing we can do and how we will do it. We are interested by strange things, for what is stranger than some of the strange thoughts and inspirations that come to us. Then, perhaps, we branch out a little and say we are going to help somebody; we are going to do something for somebody else; well, when we do that we have to know more, think harder and work more. We are apt to find ourselves very busy, and we're apt to lose sight of a good many little things that used to worry us and to find ourselves very much interested indeed. The world was made for man and, while I think man was

made for something bigger and better than the world, the main thing is to make the most use of it and keep ourselves interested. I think one of the best ways is to have something to look ahead to, something we are anxious to do—but anyway, we are pretty apt to strike a good many lessons in patience and we're apt to complain more or less. But here I've been giving you a lesson in patience sure enough. I have been talking away like I was a preacher—you know you asked me one time, when you first saw me, if I wasn't a preacher, and I'm afraid you'll find I am.

"Here we are at our corner. Well, I hope you will get over this spell of discouragement," he continued, turning and looking into her bright face.

"Ah, I believe you are over it already; no doubt my dismal talk, by contrast, has driven away the blues; anyhow, you'll have a Sunday to rest up and will come around Monday as fresh as a lark."

"Oh, I expect I shall," said Helen, laughing, "but I don't know, not having seen any lark, that I can comprehend the force of that comparison."

"Well then, I'll say, as fresh as a frog, and as lively as a grasshopper—will that do?"

"Yes, I guess that's a little better."

"Well, that is my wish, then—and also that your head shall be so clear that all their haggling and planning will go right through without stopping, and so—not annoy you."

"I very kindly thank you," said Helen, with a grave bow, "did you say empty?"

"No, oh no—I must change my wish, so there will

be no danger of misunderstanding me—that it may be so full of better things that there will be no room for their jabber—now.”

“Perfectly good.”

“Well, if that is all satisfactory then Miss Parker,” he continued, becoming serious, “may I ask you how you spend your Sundays?”

“Well, I generally sleep till nine or ten and then I get up and sit around and read, maybe, until dinner time. Then, some of the boys generally come and get me,” she continued, with a blush, “and we go riding or walking or somewhere, maybe go to see some of the girls, or to some concert or lecture or opera, there’s always plenty of places to go. Then, when I get back I spend the rest of the time most anyway, but generally in dreading getting up early the next morning and going to work.”

He had listened eagerly and now he asked, “May I come around and get you to-morrow afternoon and take you somewhere? I will try to give you a good time.”

“I thought you didn’t believe in having a good time on Sunday,” she asked, looking puzzled.

“No, indeed, I have a good time every Sunday; it is the pleasantest day of the week for me—and, I believe, I can show you as good a time as any of those other fellows, if you will allow me.”

“Why, yes, I’ll go.”

“I’ll be around about one-thirty then, shall I?”

“Yes, that will be all right.”

He hesitated for a minute, then said: “I would be glad to see you out to our church in the morning.”

"No, I am too tired, I must sleep," and, with these words, they separated; they had been standing upon the corner for some time, and now they went to their homes.

CHAPTER XIV

At the appointed time Harry presented himself at the residence or boarding house of Mrs. Gray, where Helen stayed. She was ready only for putting on her hat, and was evidently now in high spirits for she danced before her mirror as a little child would have done, and when they started she chattered away gaily enough.

"Where are we going?" she presently asked, wonderingly. His declaration of having a good time was unreconciled to her somewhat vague ideas of a Christian. "Or is it some surprise, some wonderful place I have never heard of?"

"Yes, it is a very wonderful place," said Harry, suddenly laughing, "we will get on this car and then I will tell you all about it."

"Now, let me see," he began, when they were seated and Helen had turned expectantly toward him, "I hardly know how to describe it, but it is a manufacturing place where hundreds of beautiful ornaments of every shape, size, color and shade imaginable are made."

"What are they made of?"

"Well, they are all made of one substance, and that is the strangest part of it, it is a common-looking mixture, too, if you would see it you wouldn't think it was much. It is composed of different ingredients I

suppose, but I guess it is a secret how they are mixed, at least I never saw anyone that knew, and how the things that come from it—are made of it—can have so many different colors, and can look so different and feel so different I can't see."

"From one substance, you say. Why, what could it be like? I suppose they must mould it into different shapes and then paint it or stain it."

"No, they are made with all the colors right in them. Did you ever see a glass blower put some of his coloring on the glass and then blow it all through? Well, the color spreads out through all these ornaments as they are made in about the same way, I guess."

"My, are you sure it isn't glass you're talking about?"

"Yes, I'm sure it isn't glass."

"Well, what color is it, what shape are the ornaments, as you call them; are they tough and hard, or soft and pliable?"

"First, the color of the substance is generally dark or reddish; second, the ornaments are all shapes and sizes, some are slender and fragile, some are round and hard and heavy, some are star-shaped, but they are all perfect and symmetrical, all shapes and sizes and colors imaginable, some of them soft and some of them hard, but all of them beautiful and most of them of some use, too."

"Oh, dear, I know you could tell me about them if you only would; where is the place, anyway; it's funny I never heard of it."

"It's outside the city a little ways; it's quite a large place."

"Do they only make them at this one place?"

"Oh, there are places here in the city where they make imitations but they are not as good, and they are made of different compositions, too; none of them can make them so perfect."

"And can we see them at work; can we buy any of them?" asked Helen, eagerly.

"I wouldn't try to buy any to-day, this is Sunday, you know, but I think I can get one for nothing, as a keepsake."

The conductor had just given his last cry and the train started, so, for a few minutes they were occupied in watching the diminishing crowd at the depot and the flying panorama of human beings and their dwellings, but presently Helen turned again with a puzzled look, "Those objects must be very valuable, I don't see how you can get one."

"Well, I am a friend of his," said Harry, "and he will give most anything to his friends."

"You surely know the names of some of them, don't you?"

"Why, they most all have Latin names, I guess; there's the *Dulcis*, the *Flos*, the *Dianthus*, the *Acorus*, the *Canvallaria*, the *Viola*, and a good many others of different shapes, but I can't remember them."

"Oh, dear," sighed Helen, with such well-pretended despair, that they both laughed heartily and long, and then, seeing that they were attracting attention, they began to talk of the objects of interest they were so rapidly passing.

On and on from between the tall smoky buildings, rattling over crossings, out into the poverty-stricken suburbs and then bursting out into the bright, beautiful, sunlight country.

It was the middle of May, though it had been so hot and close in the store the air was balmy out here and a delightful breeze came sweeping through the open car window. The trees were beautiful with their white and pink blossoms, the birds were singing, the grass was wonderfully green, the creeks, as they passed over, were sparkling in the bright sunshine, the horses and cattle were playfully running and kicking at the shriek of the engine whistle.

None can enjoy the freedom and beauty and purity of nature as those who have been retrained inside four narrow walls, and besieged by the rattle and din of commerce. And so this common May afternoon country scene, brought a thrill of pleasure to these two young people, unknown to the sluggish farmer who stands so carelessly throwing corn over upon and among his swarm of squealing, fighting pigs.

Their squeals and maneuverings tickle Helen and she laughs at them as long as she can see them, but their train soon slows down, for a town, and Harry catches her by the arm and tells her they are at their destination.

As they alight she laughs at the smallness of the town, but they had not come to see that, so, after watching the train puff away, they set out on foot, back over the track on which they had just come, to a creek about a half mile away.

Helen seemed in a perfect ecstasy of delight, walking part of the time on the steel rail and having Harry walk at her side to catch her when she fell, sometimes half running, half sliding down the grade to get some flower, and returning breathless with her trophy, once running to a pasture fence to pet a small calf and laughing as he went scampering madly away in fear.

"Oh, isn't this beautiful," she cried, "how green the grass is, and how clear the air seems," and she drew in several long, deep breaths, "and see how far you can see!"

"Yes, it is all beautiful," he replied, "spring is here; see, there is a robin and the leaves are almost out; let us go down on this side," and they turned down a path, crawled under a fence and entered the timber."

"Oh, isn't this fine," she cried over and over, "aren't those nice trees—they are oak, aren't they?"

"Mostly; there are some maple and some walnut."

Just then he stooped over and picked an extra large and beautiful violet which, half hidden amongst the leaves, had escaped her detection.

"How sweet," she cried, enthusiastically as he held it up, "of course I'd have to miss it."

"But never mind, I'll give it to you—for a keepsake of this afternoon."

Something in his words seemed to attract her attention, for raising herself upon her tip-toes she whirled slowly around, taking a long glance in every direction.

"What are you looking for?" asked Harry, in pretended wonder.

"I thought you was going to take me to a manufac-

turing place," she replied poutingly, "I might have known you were fooling me."

"No, but I wasn't," he replied, this is the place; here is some of the substance," and he kicked up some of the rich black dirt with his toe, "it is dark and not reddish here, and that violet I gave you, that fern, that moss, that dandelion, this beautiful oak, and yonder walnut are some of the ornaments I told you of. Are they not perfect in shape and coloring? Are they not, some of them, hard and some of the tender and fragile?"

"I'm sorry if I have disappointed you," he continued, noticing her still pouting lips, "I raised your expectations too high, but think hard now and tell me if I have told you anything that isn't true."

"Oh, I guess not," she replied, a smile chasing away the scowl, "it was all on account of that Latin. If I'd known that you wouldn't have fooled me so easy. I thought, of course, anything having such names must be very wonderful."

"And they are wonderful," he replied, "you thought I meant something made by some wonderful man, but these are made by him who made all men—men's most beautiful things are only dead imitations, and if you can think of anything more wonderful than that those little green leaves should shoot up out of that black substance we call dirt and expand and send up this small stem and then a green bud, opening up the tightly-wrapped purple and blue leaves into a beautiful flower, then in a little while dying down until next violet time comes, I'd like to know what it

is. I remember reading a poem one time in which the author held in his hand a complete violet, stem, roots and leaves and addressed it something like this:

“ ‘Oh, violet, tell me what thou art and I will tell you what both man and God are.’ Those aren’t the words but that is the idea. Well, let us go down by that bluff and I think we will find some more of those beautiful ornaments.”

It was as he said and the hours flew swiftly as they hunted the sly blossoms, swung upon the large dangling grape vines, listened to the birds singing and stood upon the bank of the creek watching the minnows darting here and there, their white sides flashing in the sunlight. But at last they retired, tired and satisfied, to an old log, to rest and to rearrange and admire their boquets.

“Are you still disappointed?” asked Harry.

“No, indeed, I never had such a nice time,” she cried enthusiastically, “don’t it seem nice to get clear away from everybody; do you come out here often?”

“I have been out here several times,” he replied, more soberly, “alone—I like to come to a place like this where I am free and can think and realize.”

“Think and realize what?” she asked, curiously.

“Oh, so many things, for instance there are these things growing up around us, all so different, and yet as far as we can see, under the same conditions, and then I think of their relation to man and his adaptation to them, or maybe I watch an ant at work, or a minnow or a squirrel, and so I think of the God that made all these things—and I have realized here more

than any where else how small and ignorant and insignificant I am. We crush an ant under our feet, it seems so small; and yet, compared to the wisdom of God, we are far smaller."

"How do you know there is a God?" she asked, after a short pause. "You cannot see him and it seems so strange."

"No, we cannot see him—we have five physical senses given us that we might apprehend the things of this earth, and we are apt to think that anything we cannot see, taste, smell, feel or hear, does not exist. If we didn't have any of those senses we could say there was nothing—no matter, no substance, couldn't we?"

"I suppose so—and yet there could be, only we wouldn't know it."

"Yes, there certainly could; well, I think we have five corresponding senses inside of us; not so clearly defined, perhaps, nor so easily measured. I think we have a spiritual sight, I think we have a sense by which we can hear the voice of God's spirit. It might be our conscience or at least related to it, so I think we have that which feels love and joy and peace and sadness, and the presence of the Spirit. We have a taste, besides that, physically, for what is best for our spiritual being, and, instead of smelling that that is pleasant or distasteful to us, we have a sense of discernment corresponding to it. But that is not answering your question.

"We have so many things, Miss Parker, in nature and in us that we believe in, and yet they are apparent

to us only through results. You say that tree is alive. I might say, how do you know it is. You cannot see it grow. Its life is not apparent through the senses, you can say, come back here in one year, it will be larger then and that will show it. If I hold out this flower and let go of it you say it will drop to the ground—the result of gravitation. You say a person is happy or discouraged. You say there is love and hatred—because you see the result. You see a fine painting, you say it was a great artist that painted that. How do you know there ever was such a man—because of the picture and because people say there was.”

“Yes, I see how that is.”

“Well I say there is a God, because of this world, this flower, and because I am here. I say it because people say there is; because of the Bible; because of science and history supplementing the Bible; because of the wonders his religion is doing on earth now; because of the wonder it has done for me; because of the instinct of worship in all nations. This is not a world of chance, its wonderful adaptation to every sense of man shows that. It has a violet time, it has a spring; it has a time for the sun to come up, and to go down. The violet has its shape, the rose has its perfume. The fish has its scales, and the wheat seed brings forth wheat. There are laws and there is certainly someone to make them and carry them out—and yet, there is never tiresome monotony though there is law. The tree grows and branches out, and yet, no two grow alike. Each has a grace of its own, there is no stiff geometrical rule for it to grow by, even the leaves are

different. Each tiny snow-flake comes down a beautiful, distinct figure.

“You see matter but not the laws that solidify it, you see light but not the motion that makes it, you see action but not the thought or motive that inspires it, you see the earth, the stars, the whole universe, but not the God that made it.”

“Yes, that is so, but it has always seemed strange to me,” she replied.

“The strangest thing to me is this: so many men believe that the earth is whirling over and over, and round and round, and yet they never stop to prove it and probably couldn’t if they tried. They have just heard or read about it. They believe the stars are thousands of miles away and yet it seems impossible. They read in their paper of some wonderful invention and accept it without question. Some foreigners come with wonderful stories of strange people and customs, and they will believe it, but yet they will not believe the testimony of their respectable, truthful, Christian neighbors. When they talk of serving God, they cannot believe the Bible, they cannot believe that the Holy Spirit is everywhere and yet, like the air, invisible. I don’t see how they can do it.”

“I guess I never thought much about it,” was the hesitating reply.

“Pardon me, Miss Parker, cried Harry, seeing her downcast eyes and reddened face, “I should not have said that—I can see, too, how they can—you have been brought up so differently—we will talk of something else.”

"No, no," she stammered, "I would rather not."

"Well, then, I will have to tell you a story and give you a poem, I guess, if that will suit you—all right. Well, once upon a time there was a smart young man, he had just come out of college and had come out an infidel, and so now he was going to lecture. There was an old Dutch farmer came up to him and asked, 'Are you de young man vot vas going to speak in de school house to-night, and vot about was he going to speak?' Well, the young man said he was going to speak from the subject, 'Resolved, that I do not believe anything I do not understand.'

"Well, the Dutchman says, 'Aha, that vas it; let me give you von little example. You see my pasture over there, hey. Vell, now my horse, he eat de grass and it comes out hair all over his back; well then, my sheep, he eat de grass, an' if it don't make wool over him, and then, vat you think, my goose eat it, too, an' if it don't come out fea'ders. You understand dat—hey?' "

The two laughed loud and long over this funny tale until Helen almost rolled from the log, and then she bethought her of the promised poem:

"Well, here it is, it is not funny but beautiful."

"Beautiful wheel of blue above my head
Will you be turning still when I am dead,
Were you still turning long before I came?
Oh, bitter thought to take with me to bed.

'Tis a great fuss, all this of Thee and Me,
Important folk we are—to Thee and Me,
Yet, what if we mean nothing after all
And what if heaven cares naught for—Thee and Me.

All those who, in their graves unheeded lie,
Were just as pompous once as you and I.
Complacent spoke their little arrogant names,
And wagged their heads, and never thought to die.

A beauty sleeps beneath yon quiet grass
Who dreamed her face, the world might ne'er surpass,
Strength is her neighbor but he boasts no more
And over them the world cries out—Alas!

Would you seek beauty, seek it underground,
Would you find strength, the strong are underground
And would you next year seek my love and me,
Who knows but you must seek us underground.

Oh, weary man, upon a weary earth,
What is this toil, that men call living, worth
This dreary agitation of the dust
And all this strange mistake of mortal birth.

This sounding world is but a dream that cries
In Fancie's ears, and lives in Fancie's eyes;
Death lays his fingers on the darkening soul
And all the glowing shadow fades and flies.

Shall death, that shuts the ears, and locks the brain,
Teach us what eager Life hath sought in vain?
Yet have I heard, so wild is human guess
This dullard death shall make Life's meaning plain.

When this mysterious self has left behind,
The subtle painted clay that kept it blind,
The ransomed essence, wantons in the beam
That seeks in vain, the dark embodied mind.

Mysterious mother substance, who are they
That flout the earth that made them? Who are they
Who waste their wonder on the fabulous soul,
I can but choose to marvel at the clay.

This clay, this dream-sown sod, this chemic earth,
This wizard dust, where in all shapes of birth—
Soft flowers, great beasts, and huge pathetic kings,
Small shapes of wonder, fill a needle's girth.

This clay, so strong of heart, of sense so fine—
Surely such clay is more than half divine;
'Tis only fools, speak evil of the clay.
The very stars are made of clay like mine."

There was a brief interval of silence, in which Helen sat motionless as though receiving the echoes of thoughts and impulses as they came rebounding and re-echoing from the beautiful creation of words she had just heard, and then looking up, she asked in a low tone, "Do you believe that our life is our soul, Mr. Spencer?"

"Yes, I think it is. You know how ghastly and horrible the body seems to us when the soul leaves it, for no one ever speaks of the soul dying—and how quickly it decays. The body is a wonderful machine and it is wonderful how closely it and the power of life in it are connected. The eye is called the window of the soul. You see some one crying; it is not the body or the face, that is sad, it is the soul. You hurt yourself, it must be the soul that feels it, for, when the soul is gone there is no feeling. All the physical senses are conveying incidents and events to the soul, while the inner senses, of which I told you, are bringing impressions from the spiritual and unseen things.

"Some people think some animals have a soul, and I suppose you might call their life a soul, for they are capable of learning and of affection—but it is inferior

and I think it is not immortal, for, in the creation, the Bible speaks of the animals being created as though with life already in them. But with man, his body was made first and then God blew from his own eternal life into his nostrils, so that he became a living soul. I think that was the difference.

"Men divide the soul into three parts, the intellect, the affections and the will, and the will seems the greatest to me. If a man wants to he can understand religion, he can love God, but if he says 'I won't' it is the unpardonable sin, and will damn him until he changes it into an earnest affirmative."

Harry had risen and was pacing back and forth under the tree, while Helen sat with flushed face, her eyes turned to the earth and yet unconscious of its presence, for she was drinking in new and thrilling revelations, catching new glimpses of purposes and possibilities of life—and of the seemingly overwhelming flood of ignorance, carelessness and irreverence of her own life.

"Won't you say, 'I will,' Miss Parker? I have been interested in you. I want to help some one be a Christian. You can understand how Christ died for you, and you cannot help but love him for it."

There were tears in her eyes when she looked up, from his earnestly-spoken appeal, and she spoke in a voice so low he could scarce hear. "I understand better and I will try; but I must think; I can't now."

"Ask God and he will show you what to do—you may be sure since he gave men power to communicate with each other, by tongue, books, telephones and

telegraphs, power to command animals and make them understand, and power, you might say, to command the laws of nature, that he did not neglect to give him power or means to communicate with himself. You will find you have a voice that will reach him, and if you listen and watch I am sure you will hear or see an answer."

"Will you answer me just one more question, Mr. Spencer?" she asked, after a moment's silence. "It is a hard one, or, at least, it is to me, and I've wondered and thought about it a good deal—that is, lately."

"Why, I'll try to; I don't know very much about—"

"Oh well, you answer them better than anyone else I ever heard," she interrupted eagerly. "It may seem strange, but it is this: why were not people put right in heaven; why do they have to suffer and dig and work here, and why is there so much wickedness?"

"That is a big question that would take the whole world and all the wise men to answer—but I will give you my ideas and I'll have to abbreviate them, too, or you wouldn't get back in time for next Tuesday's bargain sale. To begin with, this wood and stream seems a very beautiful place to us, but we would soon get used to it—novelty is the charm of life. We see each face different, meet new thoughts, hear new sounds, see a new landscape at every step. We each cultivate different tastes, different powers so that when death comes it shall find us each distinct and different and interesting, while no matter how pure and beautiful if we were created without the power of choice and had no adversities and trouble and sin to contend with, if

we had not the power to develop, and no character—for that cannot be created but must come with time—we would be weak, uninteresting, flabby, unambitious, ignorant, unsympathizing creatures. I have wondered sometimes if a man was really created until after he passed through this life, it is true his body is made, and he is given a soul, but, after all, it is only a blank; it is made up and moulded by this world's experience.

“This world is very beautiful and if it was not for the dishonesty, selfishness and terrible wickedness of men, we might call it heaven. I don't see why we couldn't, and it seems to me heaven itself would have been marred by their wickedness just the same, unless men were deprived of their powers and crippled. There would have been hands raised in rebellion even there, against the Ruler. There would have been jealousy and wickedness. But here man's spirit is softened by trouble and pain. He is calmed by experience and sympathy. He is brought through sin to want righteousness. He grows weary and wants to rest. Because of selfishness he wants love, and because of discord, peace. He is brought to a choice, and the choice is strengthened generally by years of trial, so that in the end there are two classes, those who it will be safe to put in heaven and those who it will not; as the Salvationists said, those who want to go and those who don't.

“I have thought of this earth as a miniature and imperfect heaven, we have a father here to love and reverence and obey, so that we may know how to love, reverence and obey, in a greater degree our

Father in heaven, we come to know what friendship and fellowship means, we come to pity and sorrow, so that we may practically realize his attitude toward us, we suffer that we may comprehend his suffering for us. So many of the customs and ties of earth are symbolical of what we may expect there. The great principles of heaven are taught here as to children. Because of earth's misery and evil we can better appreciate heaven, as we do a bright day after a cold, rainy week.

"Here, no matter how high the thought for a time, we must come back to earth's cares. We are dragged down and humiliated by evil and poverty—up yonder we may be pained or even sorrowful but we shall be uplifted and elevated by beauty and joy and goodness, and our joy made greater by the contrast."

Helen sat with flushed face, her eyes fixed upon his animated face.

"Did I answer your question in my talk?" he asked.

"Oh, yes—I see—I think you have converted my intellect, I don't know—I think my affections or will—or something," she stammered, "what will the girls think?"

"No matter what, you have as good a right to laugh at them for being evil, or going to a dance, as they have at your trying to be good and going to church—What does Christ think?"

"You will think about it—you will come to our meetings?"

"Yes," was the low-spoken reply, and Helen arose and took his arm. "We must start back now; is not everything beautiful?"

CHAPTER XV

Rigorous clouds had overshadowed Harry Spencer's life since the evening he had secured permission to stay by the bedside, as it proved, of his dying mother. True, she had lingered for some time, but hard work and exposure had undermined her constitution, and a deadly consumptive cough had fastened its clutches upon her, so that she became weaker and weaker, and at last quietly passed away.

True it was that he had had kind church friends to sympathize with him. True it was that his sadness was overtopped by the hope of that bright day coming. True it was that he had his little room still left, with Mrs. Brown as calm and cheerful as ever. But oh, it was sadly lacking! There was the whole earth left, but what a great void there seemed around him, always, since she whom he had cherished had departed.

Then, immediately came sad news from his kind old employer, ostracised by some of his best customers because of his activity against liquor, weakened by depression in business and a fierce competition, crippled by a too-liberal philanthropy, the white-haired old man at last must give up the struggle and surrender almost his all in wordly goods. Yet triumphantly he retains those grand principles of right and truth, that are to him the essence of existence.

So it was with great pity that Harry saw that other

good friend of his in trouble and humiliation, and there came almost a feeling of rebellion. It seemed to him that wickedness was everywhere triumphing, and the world looked very black. He was, of course, out of employment, the sickness and funeral expenses had used up the small sum of money he had saved, he was worn out from watching, and almost sick.

We who have a tormenting ailment look with envy upon the tall strong man, or the fresh, rosy-cheeked girl, as they pass by, little dreaming that they may have muscles that twitch with pain, and aches that are excruciating. So each of us sometimes look upon some seemingly calm even life, and say, "Oh, if I had everything so nice, and so little to tempt me, as they have, I could be good," unthinking that within that pleasant exterior, wild tempests have raged, that demons have fought therein and have been conquered, that some besetting sin has assailed again and again, or that evil is hanging wily and changeful, ever ready to enter in and demolish.

Harry was a strong, temperate, religious, young man, but he had no special immunity from temptation. Indeed, temptations often seem to strike hardest those who abstain most from yielding to them; and that feeling of rebellion and questioning that came to him at the news of his employer's trouble, had seemed to open up the way for a flood of evil to enter and almost submerge him, so that the next day was passed in a blackness and turmoil of mind, such as he had never felt before.

He had gone wandering over the city, that afternoon

applying unsuccessfully at several places where help was wanted—but disappointment brings so great an irritation of mind, and abhorrence, that he cares not whether he gets a place or whether he starves. He asks no more, but roams aimlessly about the streets until exhausted.

Then night and darkness came, but it brought no sleep or rest, and he walked the floor of his little room in agony, his mind so troubled that it seemed to him it must surely give way. So he wrestled with evil, it seemed, as real and as strong as himself, until sleep somehow made him unconscious; and the next morning he found himself lying upon the bed, stiff and sore and with throbbing temples.

But this day promised to be a repetition of the last, and, in his despair, he took a train to flee from the city, he did not care where. Chance led him to the banks of a small creek and into the wild timber and brushwood that hid and shaded it. There the beauty and peace and quiet calmed him, the discord and pain gradually subsided, and the sparkling water and the rustling wind brought peace and better thoughts so that he became strengthened and reconciled to whatever should befall him—not in his own strength—no, but by and through the strength of Him, against whom he had been so sorely tempted to turn.

And then, as a further rebuke to his discouragement, as he returned, Mr. Greene was waiting for him, not angry nor indignant, but with cheering words, which were suitable and gratifying to his present condition. Words, not of commiseration or regret for the

past, that had taken care of itself, but words of brightness and hope for the future. And when, after this, came the information in a quiet, unassuming tone that he had a position waiting for him in a large department store near by, he was too greatly overcome to thank his benefactor by words.

Small wonder then that upon that night as he dropped off to sleep it was upon a pillow wet with tears of gratitude; and then, the morrow being Saturday and he not going to work till Monday, that he should return to that quiet little stream in the country and there pass the day in quiet meditation and reading; or that the Sunday should be a golden day ever memorable for the fullness of blessings that came to him as he attended the church services and mingled with his sympathetic friends there, and felt the fire of faith and enthusiasm about him.

For the church was on the eve of a revival, many hearts were full and overflowing, and the overflow was already going out to that world which only gets the overflow and surplus from men's hearts. Not till a man is full can he show salvation to others, and not till he has himself tasted and proven good, does the hunger of others appeal to him. As the frothing pot boils over, even so had fervent hearts, from the increased fire at the altar, and already the miracle of conversion had been wrought.

The old pastor, Rev. James, had tried to impress upon the minds and hearts of his people the need of the effort they were about to make, for eternity, and to inspire them by thoughts of what it was possible

for them to accomplish. Now they had secured a young evangelist of exceptional power and piety, a man of personal magnetism and earnestness of purpose, eloquent, and of deep perceptions. His appearance, his peculiarities, his dress, and his language were all superseded and soon forgotten, because of the pungent truth as it came from his lips.

And so, sitting under his words that Sunday night, there had come to Harry a deeper realization than ever before that he was saved for service; and, with the answering of those recent questionings—why he should live when his mother had gone—there came into his heart a strong resolution to make an individual effort to awaken and point to salvation those with whom he came in contact.

But how often a soul inspired thus—anxious as the battle steed to rush into battle at the word of command—is quenched and disheartened as it beholds before it the great semi-circle of adversaries, some boldly defying, some in careless nonchalance, some in haughty disdain, and some with scorning taunts and jibes. So Harry had come into a very uncongenial place, with his determination, as he soon found, when he went into the store. Many of the clerks were frivolous and unthoughtful, some were indifferent and some were scornful, and some appeared to keep a barrier of frigidity between themselves and him so that there could be no bond of confidence or friendship between them.

He had distributed invitations to the meetings, among them, but his face had been flushed with indig-

nation again and again, at some of their coarse jokes and laughter, at his expense. None had seemed specially interested, though several girls had said they would come only they couldn't afford the street-car fare, and were too tired to walk that far, while one had said she guessed she could come if it was free. So a week had passed and, needless to say, he was greatly depressed. They were all so busy, there seemed to be no time or opportunity to talk with them. The main thought of most of them seemed to be, to earn that small weekly wage that stood between them and suffering and, if possible, to have a good time when unengaged by that.

On Saturday night he had been among the crowd, listening to the Salvation Army band. He was personally acquainted with several of them, and was in full sympathy with their work, which so nearly corresponded with that which he wished to do, so that his joy at their success was almost as great as their own. Then, glancing around at the motley crowd, he had caught sight of a young woman's face, with an expression of interest and longing. How he longed to help her to reach a right decision, but it seemed as though he could not. He did not know her, so it would be out of place, but oh, if Miss Ames, whose face he was so intently watching, would only step out and take her by the hand, with her gentle appeal, he knew she would surrender.

But for once Miss Ames seemed strangely unseeing. No one had seemed to notice her, and then, when the band went marching away, he watched her anxiously

yet, to see if she might not follow them, but she had turned. He went home sad and condemned because of the opportunity that had come and gone unprofited.

Then came the transfer to the lower floor, and, it seemed to him, the happening of providence that this same girl should be one of his adjacent fellow clerks. Yet as time went on that fact seemed less fortunate than at first and he began to despair of any result because of it.

The clerks on this floor seemed, if anything, worse than those above, the girls nearly all appeared to flirt with the men, and the blush of shame sometimes came to his cheeks, from the questionable jokes made by one sex to the other. Their talk was often coarse, their movements were almost unrestrained, their humor seemed of a low and vulgar character and they seemed deadened to delicacy and the finer sensibilities of even common respectable people. Was not this young woman as bad as any of them, though she seemed more cultured and better educated than most of them? Were not her jests tinged with their obscenity? Did she not laugh at their worst jests? Was she not a favorite among them because of her lively fancy and real appreciation of humor?

But there was something worse than this. There were two young men on this floor, Henry Jones and John Oleson by name, who, with their outward suave and somewhat polished manners, had the instincts and passions of the villianous rake. They treated immorality as a joke, and it was a frequent theme of their thoughts and conversation.

Harry would sometimes overhear their talk, which, foul and corrupt, seemed to him, brought up as he had been, should almost blast the lips from which it came. Their ambitions and plans showed the black depravity of their inner natures, and yet, on the approach of any of the girls, they threw on very easily that cloak of dudish sang froid. Perhaps they would go off together, he with his little airs of careless gaiety and his everlasting nothings, of which he seemed to have an endless supply, and she laughing and so blindly pleased that it made Harry sick at heart, seeing their souls so greatly outraged and imperiled.

And he had seen this girl do this. It is true she did not become so familiar with them as some of the girls. She seemed to possess more of that good breeding that demands formality. Yet both of the young scoundrels, he knew, were trying, with all the skill and cool calculation of their evil natures, to break down this feeling of restraint, so that he was strongly tempted, and even sat debating with himself, whether he should not choke the breath from their miserable throats.

But, at such times there would come questionings whether she were really worthy such an attempt, and such a sacrifice, for, at the least, it would probably cost him his position. Some of the girls in the store were certainly of doubtful character, yet there was an undefinable something about her that forbade his placing her in the same class. Then too she had that one redeeming incident in her favor: she had shown longing and concern upon her face because of the words of the Salvationists. She had listened to them with inter-

est and sympathy, instead of passing with a sneer and a giggle. She had, if had read her face aright, for once had some appreciation of something higher than her ordinary life. It might have been only a transient fancy and yet it must certainly be possible to awaken that feeling of solicitude again, since she realized that she had something within her that was worthy of care and anxiety—for, to Harry, it really seemed that some of the girls did not know they had a soul.

So with that feeling he determined to do the best he could. He would live a religious life anyway, that she might see there was something in religion. He would rebuke evil by his manner, if not by words, or by more forcible means, and he would try to speak with her about religion. There was a spark of good in her somewhere and he must reach it and bring it out.

Sometimes he felt cheered for she would, for a time, seem thoughtful, and would seem to regard him kindly if not with interest. Again he would be greatly depressed, as she seemed to unfeelingly join in the ridicule and jests directed against himself and the cause he was trying to uphold, or as she would seem to come out as a ring-leader in their unrestrained gaiety.

And yet he felt there was hope for her. He was cheered and revived by the zeal and success of the meetings, which he attended each night. He had seen worse people saved. The joy of salvation was for the reminded careless and the careless wicked awakened.

And then on that Saturday night a chance had seemed to come to him, and he had sought to incline the conversation toward religion, and yet avoid that

great danger of making it obtrusive and obnoxious. He had been pleased to find her a ready listener, and so emboldened, had asked for her company on the morrow. He would take her to that beautiful wild-wood spot that had been instrumental in comforting him. Surely, its charms would chase away her bodily discontent and misery, even if it did not serve to bring the cheering, enlightening and uplifting joy of the gospel.

So they had gone, and it seemed to him that never since his mother had died, had he been so reconciled and pleased with life as he had that afternoon. Best of all, was his good hope, that the soul of this beautiful girl would be saved from the awful condemnation. Had she not been moved to shed tears. Had she not inquired anxiously of Godly things? Had she not promised to think—nay, more to try to be saved; and oh, joy—trying for that, was never in vain.

CHAPTER XVI

Having a good deal of leisure time on his hands since the closing out of his business Mr. Greene volunteered most of it for the benefit of the meetings. He stood ever ready to aid the pastors in their work, to go here or there, to talk up and talk for the meetings, to reason with some one and advise another, to distribute notices or to give his testimony.

One afternoon he had started out to distribute some of the invitations, down a street not particularly inviting to the eye, but possessing, in its poverty-stricken inhabitants, a peculiar charm to this old philanthropist. So absorbed was he in his occupation that he had not noticed how far from home he was, when he came to a dingy, dark-looking little lunch room with a billiard table and sundry other gambling devices. discernible through the dirt-covered window.

Most respectable persons would have skipped this villainous looking place altogether, or, at most, have only opened the door sufficiently to admit the circulars but Mr. Greene was no shirker, he believed that salvation was for all and that these men needed it

There were six or eight of them inside, one an ungainly Irishman, with an enormous mouth and one eye turned so that it seemed to be always glaring at his nose, lay stretched upon a rude bench, while the

others sat in different positions and attitudes about the room.

Some were reading, some gazing at the floor and some talking, but all looked up in surprise as the door opened and the white-haired, kindly-faced old man entered. He greeted them each one, and, giving each one of his papers, was about to withdraw, when one of the number, a tall, dissipated-looking individual, who, judging from the dirty apron which he wore, and the absence of a covering for his grizzled head, belonged to the establishment—crumpled his up in his hand and threw it upon the floor, shaking his head.

“Ha, ha, Bill don’t think much of that,” laughed one of the men, spitting viciously at a spittoon.

“My friend, you don’t realize what you are throwing away,” said Mr. Greene earnestly, going up to the man and taking him by the arm. “That is an invitation, a free chance to secure salvation, to secure the riches of heaven, and, better yet, to secure God’s help and help from good people to live differently here.”

“You don’t know me?” he asked in a low tone without looking up.

“No, but I feel you need a friend; you are not a Christian.”

“Huh,” was the only answer.

“You do not attend any church.”

“No; haven’t been in a church for ten years, and don’t know as I ever shall; they’re nothin’ to me,” he added, with something of irritation.

“I’m sorry for that; you have missed wonderful pleasures and inspiration for good—a man is bound to

go down without something to hold him up—you are not enjoying this life, and have no prospect for a better future life.”

“No.”

“You can, and you should, the Bible says: ‘The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him in truth. The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord, but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness,’ and, in another place, ‘The Lord preserveth all them that love him, but all the wicked will he destroy.’ It says all, it means you, just as much as anybody.”

“Huh, very little he cares about me; let alone your nine churches—see here, do you s’pose if there is a God he can watch everybody an’ care any for ’em. Seems to me he’d have enough to do to watch his churches.”

“You know, perhaps, how a father and mother love their first child; how kind and attentive and watchful they are of it; how they lavish their wealth, their time, and care, on it; but, as another child comes to them, their love seems to expand so as to take it in, and then, as the family increases, there may be five, eight, or ten children, all claiming the mother’s time, attention and love. Some of them may seem rebellious and irreverent, and go down into sin and crime, but did you ever see a mother turn away from her boy for that?

“I remember in our family there were six boys and two girls. We all grew up pretty steady—and mischievous—except one boy, his name was William, sir, and he seemed always irritable and sulky and reckless;

he never seemed to care what he said. But how patient mother always was with him; how she seemed to love him more than any of us, though she did not show partiality! Well, that boy came to the gallows," he continued, his voice tremulous with feeling. "He killed a man and was hanged for it, and nearly broke my mother's heart, just as it would have, if it had been me that was going.

"Of course, this is a poor comparison, and yet, if weak men and women are capable of this, can you not see how an infinite Creator can watch over and care for all his children—for he owns us all.

"Ownership and possession are two different things. We may own something, far away, or in use by some one else, but we only possess that that is near at hand and that it is possible for us to use, so, as long as there is life, God who gave us the life has the claim of ownership. Some of us are a great disgrace to him, some of us try to escape from him as far as possible, but as far as we go he must still own us.

"Oh, it was hard for my mother to own her son; I remember how, as they caught him and brought him back, under an assumed name and swearing he did not know the place; how she went up to him, looked into his surly face, put her hand upon his shoulder and claimed him as her son, William Greene, though he cursed her for it. Yes, it was hard [there were tears in the old man's eyes], but she must do it, and so my friend, God must still claim you as his own, though you may be far from him, and, believe me, he cares for you, even as you curse him.

"You have heard little of him, except in the way of oaths. You are prejudiced against the church because, for ten years you have been associated with so much that is opposed to it, but, believe me, you may yet become a happy man, freed of sin, cleansed and filled with the hope of eternal heaven. Now, won't you come up to our meeting, I will be there. Come and see me, will you?"

The answer was low but distinct: "Yes."

"God bless you," and Mr. Greene shook his hand warmly, "and won't some of the rest of you come?" turning around to the rest of the group. The Irishman broke into a coarse, rough laugh, and all the rest except one shook their heads. The exception, a heavy-set, red-faced man, who had been wiping his eyes, and trying to clear his voice for the last few minutes, replied that he might.

"I hope you will; remember, I shall be glad to see any of you there," and, with these words, he departed.

There was a short silence, for even to these rough men there seemed an air of sacredness and reverence lingering from the presence and earnestly-spoken words of the white-haired old saint, but such feelings were most foreign to Mike, the Irishman and an oath broke the stillness:

"——— Bill, it s'prised me you'd let 'im take you in so 'asy."

Bill sat motionless, looking at the floor, and did not seem to hear him.

"He didn't know me," he muttered presently. as though unconsciously.

"Ha, ha, did you know him? See here, Bill, he most put you to sleep."

"Yes, I knew him," he replied seeming to arouse himself, "leastways I used to, an' he looks just like he did, only older—and better. I'm glad he didn't know me," and a shadow of pain seemed to pass over his face.

"'Cause why?"

"'Cause why? Look at me, he used to know me when I were better off."

"D—— it, Bill; you're too proud."

"Proud," he cried, angrily, "proud of having gone so to the devil, when I might a'bin somebody, if I wuz like him now I might be proud."

"Oh, well, you're goin' to his meetin'; I don't believe in his old church, an' all that nohow."

"What o' that; I'd rather believe just opposite to what the likes of you does anyhow."

"Bill's kind of stubborn to-day," put in one of the men.

"The like's o' me; huh, you'r no better," replied he of the enormous mouth, rising to a sitting posture, "mebby you're goin' to get good now, go to church an' wear a white shirt—kind o' copy atter that fellar that wer' just in."

"A thousand times better be like him than you," was the fierce reply, but in a quieter tone he continued: "No, I ain't goin' to get good, either; I never cared none for religion, but I b'lieve there is such a thing, an' ten times smarter men do, too; but it can't help me; I'm too far gone; I must have my drink; I got to

play; I swear an' I fight when I get riled, an' cuts up all kinds of deviltry, an' it don't do any good to swear off, neither; I've tried it too often."

"It's like Bill says," spoke up one of the others, "this thing o' religion is all right fer de wimmen an' children. If dey starts out when dey are young, an' keeps right at it, they got some show, but it don't seem's if many wer' doin' it these days."

"Lor', you'd think so if you saw 'em comin' out of some of these churches Sunday mornin's—trouble 'ith you, you're allus boozin' up an' don't know anything about it."

"Huh, ——— stiff-necked, dressed-up hypocrites, religun may be a good name fer goin' to church, an' church a good name fer where they go, but ———, it, there's nothin' in it," and Mike glanced triumphantly around upon the company, several of whom applauded him for his undisputable and eloquent logic. "Don't you think so, Jack Tarr," addressing the heavy-set, red-faced man who had remained silent.

"Some of 'em, not all—see here, you big hulkin' Irishman, it's easy 'nough ter say hypercrites, it's easy 'nough ter pick flaws, an' fin' fault with these 'ere rich people an' dressed-up people 'at ain't rich; why ain't you dressed up; 'cause you don't want to be, you'd rather gamble yer money an' spend it fer drink; why ain't yer rich; cause you're too lazy an' shiftless an' don't care; an' ain't ambition 'nough only to wish you were."

"Yet you expect them to live just so; you cuss 'em

'cause they have good clothes, an' are respectable an' hold their heads up, stead o' comin' down an' bein' a dog like you an' me—you call 'em misers an' hypocrites an' expect 'em to live like angels 'cause they got religion, an' yet yer don't believe in religion."

"'Lor', what a talker when you get him started," broke in one of the men, but he continued:

"I think they do—well, 'specially compared to yourself, an' I believe they're gettin' to be better every year; they're doin' more to help people, an' all that; 'tain't their money helps 'em to be good; I say the more coin a fellow has, the bigger chance to ornery; give you a hundred dollars like some o' these gents has in there pockets any time, an' you'd be in some den carousin' in four minutes; 'tain't 'cause they're made different, they've got the same hankering to do de wrong as you had; I know, 'cause I wer' raised in respectable society 'till I was twenty; I've seen girls come down an' down 'till they land in one o' those tuff hells, an' I've seen other girls that seemed like angels in comparison, just 'cause they stuck by religun.

"I know boys 'at used to go 'ith me that are good an' happy an' here I am down here; course there's some keeps respectable that ain't religious, but they behaves just because people 'ud be down on 'em if they didn't, an' because religun ha' made it unrespectable to—"

"See here now, Jack Tarr," broke in the Irishman, "sounds all right to hear yez talk, but now there's Cap Lonney, an' old John Adams an' that onery fat

Sam Black, an' Jay Goodin', they go to church, on Sundays an' cut a big dash, ——— that ——— Black, he makes me tired; I see him only last Sunday swelled up 'till he wouldn't speak t'ez common pable."

"Well, what o' that; guess you'll find rascals anywhere; I don't say but what there's a good many in the churches, but there's a ——— sight more that ain't. I say that some o' these churches here ain't any religun at all; they're all ——— rascals, an' the preacher gets up an' blows any things so'z it sounds nice, an' the people smile and show off their nice clo'es and bow and smile. -I say they're ——— hypocrites, an' wouldn't stand up fer 'em no more than you, but understand they ain't got religun; a church that has is all right I say, an' I don't b'lieve in bein' down on a fellar just 'cause he's rich er goes to church.

"'Course, in de city there's so ——— many rascals, an' so much booze, an' wimmen, an' stealin's, an' all, an' then its like the old gen'leman said," and here a smile overspread Jack Tarr's face, "yer not bein' associated wid de gents an' ladies of 'spectability, but bein' company wid yerself an' other toughs ye come to think they's all like yerself."

At this Mike burst into a volley of oaths and then an unmirthful laugh.

"Ha, ha, ha, Jack's gettin' religus. But that wuz a ——— good joke on him when Pete Carr joined the Salvation Army; yez fellars ever hear about it?"

"No, what was it?" came from two or three while one of them gave Jack a knowing wink.

"Well, ye see it wuz three or four years ago; Pete an' Jack wuz chums an' somehow they got to goin' to thez' meetin's an' wuz a good deal stirred up, an' one night they agreed, him an' Jack, that they'd go up, the very next night.

"Well, so the next night Pete does go up, an' jines 'em all just as he said, but what does Jack there do but pull off an' stays back, an' they says as how fer a month all those purty girls an' Pete, an' de Kernal hisself wuz after him 'till Jack had ter bounce his job an' leave de country till things cooled down," and the Irishman laughed at the recollection till he rolled off the bēnch and even Jack Tarr had to join in with the rest.

For a moment Mike's sympathizers seemed paramount, and ridicule and oaths seemed to have come off victorious, but a little, white-faced man in the corner lifted his voice in remonstrance. "Yer can't say nothin' agin the Salvation Army, an' Pete Carr's all right, too."

"Yes an' he is," affirmed Jack, his face sobering; he's straight an' all right, an' I wish sometimes I'd jined 'em too, if I'd stick to it like he has, but I thought it were no use, an' have got out of the notion now."

"Yer right there, Jack," continued the little man, "they've got religun an' the right kind; they're doin' stacks of good. I know they come to my house while the woman were so sick an' tended her, an' cleaned up de house, an' de childern, an' talked an' read to 'em. My woman thinks a sight of 'em, an' goes to their

meetin's, sometimes, and I stick up for 'em that they're all right."

"Well, I'll be d—— if this ain't gettin' ter be a reg'lar camp meetin' crowd. Mebbe yer won't condescend to play a game of high five, or a religious little game of seven-up 'ith a gen'leman," commented Mike, "but I hopes yez ain't principled 'gainst playin' a game of checkers to pass de time."

"D—— it, no; let's have a game, an' if Bill wants to go to meetin', he can, fer all I care, an' Jack Tarr too.

"Shuffle 'em up there, Brick, an' bring me out a drink you Bill; I'm cursed dry."

CHAPTER XVII

Anxiously, on the Monday night following their excursion, did Harry watch, from his seat upon the platform (for he was one of the large chorus choir), for Helen, and true to her word, she came, though a little late.

As usual, the tongue of the evangelist gave out its burden of inspired, earnest thought. Then the brief but powerful exhortation, and the house was filled with the rhythm of one of those old invitation hymns, that seems to so greatly touch and enrapture and thrill through the blood.

The workers slipped noiselessly about the room, speaking to the undecided and hesitating. One of them, Mrs. Baker, a saintly little woman, went to speak to some one near Helen, but Harry could not tell whether it was with her or not. She only remained a brief moment, however, and passed on.

Then came a few closing words, an inquiry and encouragement to those few who had responded to their efforts, and the benediction was spoken.

Harry pressed his way down the aisle and greeted Helen, but he did not in any way allude to her non-acceptance of the invitation, for he felt the danger of haste and of pressing the cause too hard. He turned his attention to introducing her to his friends, and he was charmed by the air of grace and dignity with

which she greeted them, and pleased by the flush of pleasure that kindled a glow in her cheeks, and brightened her eyes, no less than by the beauty of her features, which he knew would cause some commotion and wonder amongst the girls of his acquaintance.

She had come alone and he claimed it as his duty to see her safely back to her room. Most of the distance was passed in a crowded car, and in silence, but in the short remaining walk, she evinced an interest in and asked many questions about those she had met.

Then, as they parted, not asking her to come again, but speaking as though it were impossible that she should not, he told her that he would be glad to see her home every night and that if it were necessary, which she said it wasn't, he would come around for her to go.

So, night after night passed, she came and listened, seemingly with interest. She extended and increased her friendship, but all spiritual appeals seemed alike unable to move her. Once he had ventured a word of entreaty, and a reminder of her promise, but she had not answered it and had presently spoken of something else. He had had Mr. Greene go to her, but even he had been unsuccessful. She had listened attentively to his words, had agreed that they were right, but had made no sign of profiting from them.

Sadly Harry bethought him of what she had said, so hesitatingly, of her affections, and then of that verse that says, "The devils also believe and tremble." Her heart must be sorely hardened; there must something come to touch it—ah, poor fellow—he had

thought that his little talk should transform her life, and God's power had not touched her yet. Oh, how he prayed that it should! There seemed wonderful evidences of it in the meetings. There seemed to be much of the quickening, warming presence of the Holy Spirit. Was she impervious to it? Was her intellect only caught by the charm of unwonted thoughts and eloquent words?

In her everyday work at the store she seemed about as usual. She had had a spell of thoughtfulness and quietness after that Sunday of their talk, of unusual length. She had even snubbed and forsaken the company of "Johnny and Henney," as they were called in the store; had refused their "invites" to the shows and a dance, and had seemed to care more to talk with Harry until they had accused her of being "stuck on him," or of "gettin' religious."

She had denied all their insinuations, sometimes with scorn, sometimes in pretended carelessness, but they had a visible effect upon her, and presently her old manner and spirit of worldliness came back to her and she seemed from the reaction to become more reckless and uncaring than ever.

Then came a night in which she was not at the meeting. He had looked at everyone, he had searched inside and out, at its close, and she was not there. He had been looking for and fearing this. If her interest and attendance should only continue unflagging and unabated, some burning words must surely come to inspire and fire her nature. Her interest increasing, must, in time, affect her sympathies and her will, but

once the chain was broken, how hard to reunite it again! And then, too, the habit, lately acquired, of assisting this tall, graceful girl, upon the always-crowded street car, and of feeling her light touch upon his arm, and her elastic step by his side, during the few remaining blocks, was broken, and not till now that it was broken, had he prized the habit.

So, in his wondering disappointment and preoccupation of mind, the car had carried him past his destination before he noticed it, and he had to trudge wearily back.

Then, the next day a stranger had taken Helen's place at the store. A large, well-formed girl, who seemed beautiful at a distance, but who, as you came closer, almost repelled you by the coarseness of her features and of the nature within illuminating them, and from the contrast with its usual occupant Harry became painfully conscious of his acquired habit of frequently glancing in that direction.

In vain he strove against it, in vain he strove to satisfy himself that her absence was caused by some slight illness, perhaps, or because of some momentary trifling cause. He hated to ask anyone about it for fear they would tease him, but at last he ventured to ask little May Kiser.

"Oh, haven't you heard of it? It was so sad."

"Of what, no. What is it?" he cried, a sudden fear almost overpowering him.

"There was a terrible accident—what road is that, Jess, that crosses—the street?"

"The C., F. & N. Y., I guess."

"Oh, yes; that was it. It ran over a street car and tore it all to pieces they say, and killed a man, and hurt a woman and a boy."

"And Helen?" cried Harry.

"They took her to the hospital somewhere. What was the—where did they say she was hurt?"

"A cut in the forehead, several ribs broken, and, if she recovers, will be a cripple for life, I think is what it said," replied Jess with unsteady voice and her handkerchief pressed to her eyes.

"It was perfectly awful—horrible—I think Jack has the paper over there. Ask him if he has the Record."

"It was with a husky, unnatural voice that he asked for the paper, and, receiving it, went to his department, away from everybody, to read it.

Yes, there was the picture and headline, "A Street-Car Disaster," but his eyes were swimming so he could not distinguish the smaller type.

A thousand things had come flashing into his mind. He recalled her as he had seen her only the day before. He thought of some words she had said. He thought of her condition, yet unsaved, and of some words of warning to those in that condition. He had heard the night before, he thought, of her taking the car. She might have been coming to the church—no, that was a different street. She might have been going somewhere with Henry Jones or John Oleson, but if so, they had escaped, for they were both in their accustomed places and talking away as usual—then, crash, and she was suffering, groaning, or, perhaps, unconscious, if she did recover—

Clearing his eyes, he looked down the columns, the dead, the injured, the loss and the blame. He did not see her name. Maybe she was unknown, but there was none who could possibly be her, from the descriptions. There must be another paper.

Mechanically he arose and took the paper to the girls.

"Where did you read that about her?" he asked.

"Why, that's the paper, I guess; yes, here it is."

"Why, that says Cora Bonbright."

"Well, that's who I was talking about," and the girls burst out in unrestrained laughter.

"White as a sheet, wasn't he Jess; looks like he had had a sick spell."

A great revulsion of feeling came over Harry. He stood blinking and biting his lips, his white face became scarlet. He could hardly realize that it was a joke—it must be so.

"Where is Helen—Miss Parker?" he stammered.

"She has a headache; was not well enough to come down; nothing serious" replied May suddenly ceasing her laughter for his deep feeling had impressed her; She saw it was by no means a funny joke for him.

He said nothing more but turned away hearing, as he did so, Jess say to May, "Why, I had no idea he cared so much for her; wasn't he scared—I wonder if it didn't make him mad?"

Returning the paper with a quiet "thanks" Harry returned to his department to ponder upon the great difference between Helen Parker and Cora Bonbright, to accuse himself to some extent of selfishness, and yet to rejoice that it was as it was.

That day seemed to be one especially full of trial and vexations, and evening found him weary and depressed so that, instead of anticipation of the evening's service, there was a strong temptation to lie down and rest and perhaps finish the book he was reading.

But somehow he was restless and his book seemed strangely uninteresting. He kept thinking of his unoccupied chair in the choir, and his imagination called up the scene as he had seen it night after night—the familiar church walls, the energetic young evangelist beside the pulpit, with his Bible open in one hand, the other used to emphasize his earnest talk, the older minister sitting quietly in his chair, the rows of upturned faces, one among them especially interesting him and on which he noted every expression.

It changed, it seemed interested, it changed, to a smile, it became grave, it relaxed into unconcern or indifference, but the expression he so longed to see did not come. At last he groaned in despair, the face vanished and he awoke to find himself in his own little room lying upon the sofa.

Getting up, he wiped the perspiration from his face, and looked at his small clock. It was already time for the service to begin, but he would go. He hastily made his toilet, and hurried to catch a car.

He was late, the choir was full, likewise the church, so that it was with difficulty he secured a seat in the back part of the room. Rev. Brown was just reading the lesson and in a moment more the evangelist began a strange but startling and very forcible appeal for Christianity.

How glad Harry was that he had come, for, though he had seen several revivals, he had never seen so great an effect produced by words, nor such a wonderful conquest by truth and the Spirit.

Never before had he known the power of the Gospel to be so felt. Never had he seen the look of soberness and conviction so widespread. Never before had he seen the tears of regret and the tears of joy, so mingled, never before had he seen so many strengthened and willing to urge upon others the beauty and preciousness of salvation.

Near by was a young man who seemed to have been greatly sobered and troubled by the talk, and when the invitation was given Harry went to him and urged him to give up struggling against his good impulses and desires, and to forsake sin and its condemnation. He was a bright young man, and seemed to fully realize his condition, and, being well-nigh convinced, Harry at last had the joy of seeing him make his way to the front.

Then, looking around, he saw another man to whom no one was talking. He was an older man, with a white, dissipated face, so far as could be seen, for he sat looking upon the floor, his chin supported by his hands and his face well-nigh buried in them. There he sat so steadily and so unmoved by anything about him, that if there had been anyone else to whom Harry could have gone he would certainly not have disturbed him, but there was not. So he was debating in his mind how he should approach, and what he could say to one so unconcerned, when a hymn was given out to be sung.

The man had evidently been partially conscious of what was being said, for he straightened up as though in anticipation of the song. The seat beside him had been vacated and Harry sat down in it and extended his book.

The man tried to sing but was evidently unused to it. Sometimes, when confident of tune, his voice would swell out and broaden, quite boldly, then he would seem to falter and his assurance to fail him, so that he would suddenly cease and mark time only by the movement of one of his long, tapering fingers.

As they sat down he resumed almost his former position, but Harry, pointing to the headline of one of the songs, "Jesus Saves," asked, "Do you believe that?"

Raising his eyes, the man looked at it for a full minute it seemed, and then replied, "I don't know."

"You never knew it from experience?"

The man shook his head.

"Wouldn't you like to be a Christian? Wouldn't you like to be saved from sinning, and have your sins forgiven?"

"Yes—but it ain't possible."

"It is possible only through Christ. If you repent, he will forgive you."

There was a moment's hesitation and then he replied:

"Well, I dunno; I an' the boys talked it over, an' they 'lowed if a man started early, or a woman, an' stuck to it, it wuz a good thing, but that it wuz no good for us."

"Why is that?" asked Harry, quietly.

“ ‘Cause we’re too far gone—we’re too tough,” he replied, with a shade of fierceness in his tone.

“See here, you know a man cannot forgive and cleanse you from your sins. You have been sinning against God. You have been breaking his commandments. You may have stolen that which was God’s but was in the possession, for the time, of some man, and then,” he said, “you know: ‘Even as you do it unto one of these, you do it unto me,’ so it must be God that shall forgive you, and it is just as easy for him to forgive forty years of sin as it is one year. He can wipe it out, because Christ died for you, and redeemed you.

“Your soul will be changed, born again, as the evangelist was just saying. You know you said, if a man started out early that religion was a good thing. If God forgives your sins, your soul will start out as fresh and clear of guilt as you started out in this world but your body will still be old and marked by sin. I do not say but what your old habits will sometimes bother you, nor but what you will sometimes be tempted, but it cannot sin without the consent of the soul. You will hate sin then, and you will have divine help, to conquer it. Won’t you go forward to-night?”

“No,” he shook his head, and though Harry could see only part of his features, he knew of the hopeless despair upon his face.

“If I wuz forgiven, an’ knew it, I’d turn right around and do some d—— meanness—why, if I’d die right away,” he continued earnestly, “an’ go to heaven, I’d be hankerin’ fer’ liq’r an’ such, seems to me, till it ’ud be a hell. I don’t know anything about the devil’s

place, if there is any, but there'll be plenty go there, if I do, an' I'll be more at home amongst 'em, I guess."

Harry sighed deeply. What a black, impenetrable cloud hangs between such a man's eyes and God! There was not much more could be said, though for a little time he did not give up his attempt, and, at the last, he invited him to come again to the meetings.

The meeting was being brought to a close, and it was surely time—eleven o'clock—but how precious to heaven and earth had these last moments been, in the gaining of souls!

He had turned to go out with the lingering crowd, when he turned back and rubbed his eyes, and looked again—there was Helen Parker coming down the aisle toward him.

CHAPTER XVIII

Yes, it was Helen Parker, and he had thought her sick. He had been so earnestly regretting that she was not there, for she could not, he had felt, have resisted the wonderful power of this meeting, and now it dawned slowly upon his puzzled mind she was not sick, she had been there, though he had not seen her, and she had come through the meeting unchanged.

Yes, for in that brief minute, till she had come to him, he had eagerly studied the soul as it is seen through the eyes, the face. What need of words. The transforming light had not come—besides, all of the converts were still up in front.

As he greeted her it was with disappointment so great that he could scarce speak, and she must have seen or felt it, for she turned her face away as though she well knew she had not met his wishes, and felt ill at ease under his look. Little did he know of the tumult raging within her.

The car was full and had started, when they came out, and so Harry asked if she would mind walking. It had flashed into his mind that in that event he would have a good opportunity to find what were the workings of her mind and heart, what obstacle barred her so effectually from the acceptance of mercy, or whether she were apathetic and uncaring.

She expressed her willingness as it was such a clear

beautiful night, almost as light as day. So they had started, walking in silence for some distance; perhaps, each thinking of the same thing, but neither wishing to start too precipitately in conversation on this theme of such wonderful importance, and yet requiring such careful handling. Partly as an introduction to greater things and partly to satisfy his curiosity, Harry at length asked, "You were sick to-day, were you not?"

Just in front of them was a man, walking so slowly that they had almost overtaken him, and, attracted by Harry's voice, he looked around, and then, with a sudden start, he turned facing them, hesitating and with an expression on his face as a thief, caught with some pleasing beauty and debating whether he should run or hold his ground.

Harry at once recognized him as the man to whom he had talked in the meeting that night, but in no way could he account for the strange indecision of his manner nor why he should stand looking at them in that fashion—unless he had changed his mind since their talk, and, wishing to tell him of his determination or speak of it in some way, was embarrassed by Helen's presence. He was about to ask if there was something he wished to say when his attention was suddenly attracted to Helen by a kind of gasping cry and intaking of the breath and a consciousness that the graceful lithe form at his side had suddenly become rigid and cold.

Into her features had come a coldness and scorn that had seemingly transformed or frozen them into marble, and her eyes flashing with angry disdain gleamed

in the semi light of the night as he had never seen them before. In his surprise he could only follow her gaze to the trembling wretch before them who stood with opened lips as though he would speak and yet from whom there came no sound and then again look back to her, whose expression, as she turns, gives him a shock.

And then a tremor seems to pass through Helen's frame. She throws out her hand to him as though she needed his support, and he feels that she is trembling violently. A transformation comes upon her face such as he could not have dreamed possible. The haughty lips relax, there comes a tinge of color and sympathy into the cheeks, an indescribable expression of seeming pain and regret, and with a fresh start of surprise he notes the glistening of tears in the eyes that had glowed so fiercely and again he thinks he is dreaming. Then she left his side and took the man by the hand and cried over it and called him "Father."

The night had been strangely varied, since first he had felt his senses drowsily slipping away from him in his little room. It had been a strange admixture of dreaming, surprises and reality, and now his confused brain began to wonder whether he had left his room at all except in the roaming of his imagination, and whether the singular movements of this gaunt wrinkle-faced old man and this beautiful sobbing girl were not strange fantasies of his unconsciousness.

But presently he had convinced himself that they were not and he began to be conscious of what they were saying, not that he understood so much the

meaning of their talk until afterwards, but he felt the mechanical impress of their words upon his ears.

"I want to be your friend now," Helen was saying earnestly, "I'd like to help you somehow—to quit drinking and—be better."

The man gave a great sigh.

"I'm glad you do care some for me, but the way you treated me before was ther best; 'tain't right, my girl, 'at I should drag you down. I'm glad to see you go to church, I—I'd better stay to my old place."

"No, father, I've treated you wrong, awfully wicked, and I want to show you I'm sorry. If you could come and live at Mrs. Gray's so we would be near each other maybe she could give you some work. She needs a man every once in a while I know, and if you could—but maybe you have some work."

"No, I haven't much," he replied, huskily.

"Well, wouldn't you come then if I should get you a place? I believe I could rent a little room right next to mine. I'm sure you'd like it, and I could fix it up nice; I'm working at ——'s, you know."

"I'm afraid—I know you'd get tired of me; I ain't fit—"

"You are too, papa, you will be; I'm different from what I was—don't you see. Mrs. Gray's is not so fine; I am not so proud—"

"You are different, Helen, I believe—" and here the man seemed to ponder for a moment.

"It's probably just as well," he continued slowly, "if you'd see about de—about a room, and if I can get something to do, we'll see about it Helen."

"All right; I'm sure I can."

"You must tell me of yourself—and your mother—I haven't heard lately, you know."

"Yes, but first I must introduce you to my friend."

Some movement of Harry's had seemingly brought him to remembrance and she led the man over to him, and said,

"This is my father—Harry Spencer."

He had only words and sense to bow and mutter, "your father."

"Yes," she said, "I have not seen him for a long time, and I want him to come and live at Mrs. Gray's now. We're going home," she continued, with a short laugh, "we can talk as we walk and it is getting late."

So the three set out, Harry walking behind the others.

"You must excuse me," Helen had said, "for I have so much to tell my father, and you know I have walked home with you so often—you can't complain," and so, as he walked along, perhaps the motion helped to clear away that hazy dreamy feeling that had so oppressed him. He began to comprehend that this wretched, hopeless man, and this beautiful, thoughtless, young girl, for both of whom he had labored, and for whose souls he was so anxious, were strangely enough father and child, that the strangeness of a providence which cannot be fathomed had brought them together from a separation of which he could not guess.

They were not talking so much after all. Helen's

news, whatever it was, was soon told. A change in one's life can be told quickly and the work, the everyday life of a score of days can be expressed in a single sentence. As for the father, his life and the changes therein could be best expressed by silence. He had nothing to say and besides he was content to only walk and feel this young girl upon his arm and by his side; to look down into her face, to dream a little perhaps of younger days; to look upon the bright moonlight and the peace of the now sleeping city and perhaps it seemed like heaven to him.

And so the past was dropped and they spoke now and then of their plan for the future—she gladly and he with gratitude and yet hesitating acquiescence. When they came to their destination, Harry, feeling, he noticed with surprise, a dislike for the man, yet, that he might show his sympathy, took him by the hand and said that he was glad he and his daughter had found each other and, reminding him of their talk in the meeting that night, said he hoped he should see him there again and that he would think seriously of accepting religion, as a help and a safeguard to him and a joy more than he could imagine.

The man seemed greatly affected and replied in a husky voice, not lifting his eyes, and then Harry left them. As he looked back, Helen was sitting upon the lower step, and her father, loathe to go, was leaning against a tree near by, his eyes still turned upon the ground.

The next day Helen was back in her place at the store and all day seemed so cheerful and happy that

Harry was unreasonably and foolishly jealous and cast down, that this miserable old drunkard should so occupy her thoughts and perhaps mar the great purpose for which he had been so long striving.

He was glad to see her kind to him, and wish to reform him, and yet human ties seemed small and unimportant by the side of that great bond of love he wished so earnestly to see established between heaven and the soul of this girl. Should she reform him it would be a grand work, but human-wrought transformations are scarce, and at the best are only a change of form and not of heart. Besides, he had somehow reached such a steadfast, unchanging idea of the hopelessness and despair of this man that he looked upon his words as almost a certainty that he would disgrace her.

And then, too, the meetings were almost over, the few remaining nights were precious. Would she come out and avail herself of them, or would she stay at home with him, to visit and to show her affection for him? He thought the latter more likely, but even should she come, would she go forward. He knew that each rejection strengthened pride and made acceptance less possible. She had passed through the night before, and to his judgment that seemed a crisis—the place where she should have yielded, and she had not.

So, as he went that night it was with doubts, not in God, not in the hope and power of salvation, no—but in her, that she would consent to be saved. He tried to reconcile himself to, or rather to imagine, the thought

that she might after all be lost. There were hundreds of souls just as precious being lost. There were girls—he had passed some on the way—as pretty and as graceful, though many such did not exist, hilarious, unshamed, reveling, wicked—but this girl he loved. He said it to himself over and over; she was more precious to him than body and soul.

What was his surprise then to see her come in, alone. Maybe her father had not come as they had planned last night, but he could gather from her face no disappointment; instead, there seemed however to be a different expression than usual, but he could not make out what or why it was.

The meeting had progressed about as usual when near the close the evangelist said, "And now we would like to hear from some of those who have just lately started in the way. It will do you good to speak a word, if you have found Jesus, a Savior, if he has brought you a peace and joy, if you have felt the blessedness of forgiven sins, tell us of it; encourage us, encourage some of these others who are weak about you, and you will find yourself encouraged and strengthened by the effort."

This exhortation was at once responded to by several and then Harry was astounded to see her rise to her feet and speak with something of that old air of defiance that so well became her.

"I believe I was saved last night; I feel that God cares for me and that I care for Him."

That was all, a short and inelegant testimony, some would say, and yet it was well spoken, and seemed

better as you heard it from her lips. A few words—yes, but they meant a great deal, they were enough to send a great thrill of joy that is unspeakable through the heart of one who was sitting forward in the choir.

And then this same individual went down and shook hands with her as the meeting closed. He said nothing but his eyes showed that he was very glad, and as they pressed their way out amongst the crowd, they set out together, walking. Neither had spoken, but he had cast a glance of disfavor at the waiting car, and she had seemed to understand, possibly they had read each other's minds, possibly they had not seen the car. As the girl spoke, her words did not seem to indicate what her thoughts were, and her voice was sort of dreamy as though it was hardly intended for her companion, "Oh, isn't it wonderful?"

He however seemed to understand to what she alluded and also that she had addressed him, for he answered "Yes, to feel you're saved, to feel the presence of God—but may I ask you when you took that step, Miss Parker, I—I thought—not at the meeting last night."

"No, not at the meeting—and I knew last night you felt so bad about it, you saw that I wasn't, and you looked so sorry—that was the strange part of it. I didn't know whether a person could be converted like I was, and if it had been anybody else I wouldn't have believed it—but I felt to-night that I was and I just told them so.

"You see that Salvation Army meeting was the first time I thought much about such things, and somehow

I never forgot that. Then your talk and the way you acted, seemed so different from the rest of us. Then I began to come to the meetings, and the longer I came the worse I felt. I sometimes thought I'd quit coming but it seemed like I couldn't. As soon as night would come, I would be thinking about it, and was restless and fidgety until I would get ready and go.

"Well, you know the day I was sick, the evening before that when I came home, I was feeling meaner than ever. Some things had been said at the meeting that stirred me up so I was just miserable. I felt that I had lived so careless and wicked all my life, and then I thought how I had promised you to try and be a Christian and how I'd felt like I ought to go up to the front every night and then I hadn't.

"So, all that night I couldn't sleep, I felt like I must settle it one way or the other, I knew that if I should join the church May and Nell and John and all those would laugh at me. It seemed like I would have to give up dancing and all my fun, the theater and everything, and I didn't know whether I could stand that or not, and then another thing: I had always felt kind of hard since I had left home. I used to live on ——— street you know. I never told you much about it, but I did. My father drank, and I thought that was a disgrace to me and I had come to hate him. Then my mother and I had trouble on account of the man she had married partly and partly on my account, and I came to hate her worse than my father. You can't imagine how I hated her and how bitter I

felt against some of the people I used to know, and because I had had to leave home and work in a store. Sometimes, when I'd think of it I used to just jump up and down and shake my fist and almost bite and kick things around me, and of course feeling anything like that I knew I couldn't be a Christian.

"I walked the floor that night and read the Bible and thought, but to save me I couldn't seem to feel any better and by morning I was about sick and sent word I couldn't come to the store. Then I tried to go to sleep. I did about noon and slept all afternoon, so I felt a little better; at night I came to the meeting again I thought maybe something would help me to decide.

"I did almost decide; there at the last I did almost say I would give up, but still it seemed like I couldn't go forward and I felt awful. Then when I saw you, you looked so disappointed and I felt worse than ever. I knew you was going to talk to me, and I dreaded it."

"Well, I dreaded it too," put in Harry, "I was afraid I would get you disgusted with my preaching."

"No, I don't think you would have, you always seemed so careful not to say anything that would hurt my feelings. Well, then we met my father, all of a sudden he was right there in front of me, as though he was put there just to see how I would act and I was wondering myself how I would treat him. I felt if I got mad again and sent him away like I despised him that I might as well give up trying to be religious. I thought at first that would be the way I would do, and

then I thought, 'Oh, if God will only help me I will try to treat him right,' and then I went up to him and asked him if he would forgive me, and told him I would be his friend. He had asked me to once and I had refused, and then it seemed like I was so glad I did it. I felt better right away.

"And then that night when I went up in my room I asked God to forgive me, and told him I wouldn't hate anybody any more and that I would try to do right. I prayed that my father might come back, and that I might be able to help him—and it seemed like I felt an answer as you once said I would. Wasn't that a strange way to be converted?"

"Yes, but a very good way; better than going forward, as some do at the first impulse, or just because some one else does, without any sober thought and appreciation of what they are giving up and what they are receiving."

He was thinking himself of the great providence of God and how poor human plans and judgments are.

"And I had the little faith to believe you were not thinking much about it, or was kind of giving it up, and I had made up my mind as you said to give you another talking to, when we met your father and I was so surprised by the way you acted that I was really stunned and thought sure I must be dreaming."

"Not much wonder," replied Helen, laughing, "seeing you did not know I had a father, but now you know why I acted as I did. But you don't know how different I feel. Above everything else I would like to see my father converted and join the church, he

would be all right if he could quit drinking, but that keeps him back just as my stubbornness did me, for I was stubborn and that was all, while he has such a terrible appetite to conquer. I used to think there was no hope for him, just as he feels about himself, but I feel now that if he were converted and was really saved, he might be able to quit. I feel different about myself and I feel different about him."

Her voice had become tremulous and broken by emotion and Harry did not break in upon the silence that ensued. Perhaps he could not offer much hope for this old, hopeless man and yet God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.

"You will come up sometime and talk with him," she asked presently, "you—I cannot, talk, and you always seem to know what to say."

"Yes, I will come some night, if you wish it; where is your father now; did you get the room?"

"Yes, we got it, but Mrs. Gray wouldn't give him any work; he got a place though in a restaurant; he was a waiter, I guess, in the place where he has been and is used to that kind of work so it wasn't hard for him to get a place."

"Is he at Mrs. Gray's now?"

"No, I saw him when I went home to supper to-night but he said he wouldn't come to stay until to-morrow. I showed him the room and he seemed much pleased with it, and I'm going to fix it up a little better, if I can get up in time to-morrow morning. Oh, dear, but I do get tired."

They were at Mrs. Gray's door and Helen imme-

diately sat down upon the lowest step with a great sigh of relief, while Harry, loath as the father had been to leave the companionship of this girl, stood leaning against the tree looking down upon her.

She had her face turned up to the great white moon with a far-away look in her eyes—the moonlight lending a peculiar grace and beauty to the features that were always pleasing. In Harry's gaze there was the admiration of a traveler who comes upon a landscape more beautiful than he had dreamed of and stands with the tints of color and harmony filling all the powers of reception, and thrilling the very soul within him, or of a great scholar who, with mind expanded, gazes upon a great truth spread out before him with unexplainable delight.

Such an admiration is highest tribute to a woman but Helen was evidently unconscious of it, for she presently jumped up and bade him go home, as it was late.

CHAPTER XIX

Love,—the greatest thing in the world, the only cord by which the Savior of men could draw men from their selfishness, to serve him; the only subject of his two greatest commandments to men that, in its immeasurable greatness influenced the Great God to give his only begotten son to redeem the ignorant, swarming, sin-stricken races of the first century; that mystery that cements and unites the happy homes of this country; that central thought of religion and philanthropy that warms, and as the heated iron, softens and sets glowing the hearts of men—brings charity and sympathy for others and brings to themselves unselfishness and a desire to help others, to replace selfishness and cruelty, or apathy and indifference.

So, though Helen Parker had seemed to be destitute of that natural love which a daughter should have for her parent, conviction had brought it strongly upon her that her irreverence and undutiful conduct toward him was far from right, and then in that suddenly-brought-about choice, in which religion had so strangely come into her life, it had brought a glow of feeling, contrasting with that cold scorn that had always so cruelly met him—if not true love, it was at least a strong reaction from hatred.

And then, perhaps, the love came, and was strength-

ened by her plans, and interest and thoughts of him. Where before she had had despondency and sometimes a feeling of recklessness, because of her loneliness and the fewness of friends who really cared how she fared or who were interested in the doings of her little home or room life, now each day she could look forward to seeing some one there to welcome her, to listen to those things that had been of interest to her during the day, and one for whom she could plan.

How she did husband her little wages, a sum that at first had seemed barely sufficient to support her own existence, how she planned to have a small surplus left, to purchase some little article of clothing, perhaps, that she saw her father needed, or some little ornament to brighten and cheer his room, how a whole day was often brightened by looking forward to the evening when she might make her little purchase, a purchase that would have seemed trivial and despicable to the fashionable young Miss Parker of a couple of years previous to this, but now to the same individual was precious, because of this same love and sacrifice.

How glad she was made by his thanks, and his sometimes touching anxiety to do nothing that would displease her, impulsive as she was, so that where her hatred had been fierce and resistless, now that her nature had been changed and her ambition turned to helpfulness, it was no weak vacillating fancy that urged her to do for him, but a strong and steady purpose, strengthened by the fire of Christianity.

And it was well for the father that her devotion was so strong and untiring now, for he was fighting a bat-

tle against great odds. How sadly obliterated had been that strong intelligent lawyer of twenty-two, how cruelly the form of that glad young husband of twenty-five, so fond of his child, how he must now fight that awful power that had overcome the strong young man, how must he throttle again and again that poisonous viper which seemed to rise up within and in its great struggles to cause his very body to writhe with anguish.

Busy in the kitchen of the restaurant through the days, which seemed endless, he would come home at night and throw himself upon the bed in his little room, and there Helen would find him, sometimes lying quietly with his face turned to the light, gazing maybe through the open doorway as though expecting her, and at such times she would go in to him with expressions of sympathy and solicitude and stroke the cold moisture from his brow and run her slender fingers through the grizzled hair until, perhaps, he would close his eyes, contented, and sink into sleep which, though troubled and restless, was a partial rest to him.

Then at other times she would find him with his face buried in the pillows, tossing impatiently about, and a glance at his face as he turned, revealed an expression drawn and defiant, a fierce contraction of his features that showed that all his powers were concentrated in the struggle of a desperate will against raging passion and desire, and at such times she dared not go in but could only pace the floor of her own little room in the agony of one that sees a loved one desperately sick.

But gradually he began to repel the burning, tor-

menting thirst with greater ease, the dissipated, miserable body began to recover from the demon's work, so that the strong coffee or chocolate which Helen gave him could satisfy its pangs to a great degree. He began slowly and almost unconsciously to drop the accent and the language of the tough, unrefined class from amongst whom he was trying to ascend, his brain became clearer and brighter, and his deadened and coarsened sensibilities began to awaken.

We will not call him a drunkard again. As we look in upon him and Helen one night about two weeks after his coming to Gray's we would call him another man, he seems quite cheerful. Helen is humming some tune and presently breaks out into a song that she had known in better days and he listens eagerly and praises her for it. His eye has come to meet hers squarely, he has lost much of that dogged look—yes, for in this hopeless old man hope has sprung up—queer—yes, and ambitions, too; strange hopes, but the strangest and least possible seeming now to press forward as strongest—that he might become a respectable lawyer, and go into practice in some smaller town with Helen always by him.

And now let us remember Harry—but no, my pen will not stay long with him. His life is the monotonous uneventful life of a steady, sober department store clerk. He has no father or mother to come in suddenly to enliven it, he is making few new friends, he is joining but little in the excitement and pleasures of life, so seemingly indispensable to many of the young men, but he has still the comfort and solace and

joys of religion, which so few comprehend as the truest pleasure and the greatest blessing of life.

No, my pen turns irresistibly to wonder what Helen will say and do as she comes back into the store with the mission of Christ wrought in her. Even as Harry's eyes so often turned toward her, for he knew there would come conflict, not now within but from outside forces, her companions could not help noticing the change, and she must in some way establish the new relation that must for the future exist between them.

At first they attributed the alteration in her manner to her brief sickness, and told her she was not well yet she was so still and looked so different. She took no part now in their coarse wit and irreverent sayings, but even seemed to try to repress or avoid them. She declined all invitations from her admirers, Johnny and Henney. She even seemed to have become apathetic toward the theaters, so that they came to acknowledge that if she were sick, it was, indeed, a very strange sickness.

Young Oleson, chagrined and jealous, one day ventured to openly connect it with her growing intimacy and friendship with Harry, saying that she must have caught the religious fever of him, for she had the same symptoms, and he was afraid if there wasn't a change for the better hers would soon become a chronic case.

Of course this brought a laugh, and from this time on they gave her no peace. Harry wanted to protect and stand by her, but any effort on his part he felt

would only give greater cause for their jests and jibes.

That old saying of Solomon's that, "An un-Godly man diggeth up evil, and in his lips there is as a burning fire, that he shutteth his eyes to devise froward things and that moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass," was impressed upon his mind as never before. He had once been the object of their ridicule but it hurt him far more now to helplessly listen to the persecution of this fair, proud young girl, to see the scorn and indignation that must come at their taunts, and to see her so heroically struggling against the almost irrepressible temper.

One day, at the noon hour, young Oleson told of how on the evening before he had gone to Mrs. Gray's lodging house to see if she wouldn't go to a swell dance with him—indeed it was so swell that he had invested a couple of dollars in tickets—but she had come out of the house with a Bible under her arm and a pious expression on her face, barely nodded at him and walked right away to church, and how he had been so charmed by her manner that he had serious notions of joining the church himself.

He told this in such pitiful, whining tones, and with such ludicrousness and exasperating exaggeration, that there was a great outburst of laughter and Helen, stung beyond endurance, jumped up and, stamping her foot in rage, advanced fiercely upon him.

Thereupon the two youths set up a howl and fled about the room in pretended horror, knocking over chairs and jumping over tables, but she did not chase

them. Instead she burst into tears and, surprised by this, they had for a moment ceased their demonstrations, when she turned to John Oleson and spoke to him with great earnestness: "You need never come after me to go anywhere. I don't want anything to do with you and I don't care what you say or think. I've joined the church and I'm going just as often and just as long as I please, and by God's help I'm going to live differently from what I have."

Her voice softened from angry defiance to lower and emotional yet determined tones, so that one after another ceased their laughter, and their faces became grave and wondering. Conversation seemed to have received a death blow and after an uneasy silence most of the group went back to their work or out upon the street.

To Helen there seemed to come a reactionary depression. She had been tried to the last extremity, and now she thought she had said something that would give still further cause of ridicule, and she could never stand it. Why couldn't people live a Christian life without other people knowing it. She could have done this or that to have allayed their suspicions, she could have kept friends with John, gone to the theater some night with him—a good many of the church people went to the theater anyhow—but most foolish of all, why had she said what she did? In the cold criticism of her present depression her words seemed, as she recalled them, unsuitable and poor. And, why should tears have come into her eyes—they would call her a sniveling church member now.

It was the day of the last night of the special meetings. Helen had been staying at home part of the time with her father but as this was the last night she felt that she wanted to go. She made special efforts to induce him to go with her, but he would not consent.

It being a sort of round up and inventory of the converts and the blessings of the series, the spirit of thanksgiving and joy, the words of the sermon, the hymns, came with a peculiar uplifting and strengthening force, that made the annoyances and even persecutions she had received, seem insignificant, and she took upon herself a new resolve to stand firm whatever happened to her.

Upon the way home Harry praised her for the words she had spoken.

"Do you know," said Helen, "I was sorry afterward that I said anything."

"Why, why?"

"Well, you know how they talk. They'll call me everything—they'll set me crazy now—where, if I'd just kept still and let them talk, they would have forgotten it in time."

"No, I don't believe they will talk as much now that they know where you stand. Bad as they are they think more of a Christian that comes right out and does not act ashamed of his religion, than they do of one who they think, perhaps, is just trying to be a little better than themselves."

"Well, I supposed it would be worse."

"No, I don't believe it will, but of course you must expect them to make fun of you some time. Their

tongues are not converted by a good deal. Now that they know you have the religious fever, I can stand by you and help you, maybe more than I could have done before.

"It is never safe to try to take a neutral part. In spite of yourself you would be making concessions to them, or at the least you would be lowering religion in their eyes by trying to keep it secret, while if you come out boldly, as you did to-day, and stand right by it, you may even bring some of them to be Christians. I noticed that two or three of the girls seemed very much affected, especially Eva Black. I think she will stand up for you from now on."

"I hope so. She is about the best girl on the floor—that is, I think so now. I used to think she was awfully slow and quiet. I'll try to help her and any of the girls, but I'm so weak myself, I can't explain. I just feel different—you know how it is."

"Yes, I know how it is, and feeling different you will act differently, so that if you cannot say much your life will be a great influence. She will watch you—they all will—and if they find you honest and straightforward in your belief they cannot help but admire you. Persecution should strengthen us. If we dodge and try to escape from it we will sacrifice our strength—we will submit and comply and knuckle down and weaken—but if we defy it we can turn it to our good. We know that they are watching us, and will, therefore, be more careful. We will not do this or that, because it will give them occasion to point at us in derision. Or, if we feel that we have some influence

over them and that so far we have set them a good example, we will be all the more careful not to spoil it all by yielding to one temptation."

There was a short silence and then Harry asked, "Couldn't you get your father to come out to the meetings?"

"No, he wouldn't come because he said his clothes were not fit and that he didn't look well enough. He is afraid that people will look down on me if he goes anywhere with me, but I told him that you wouldn't—that you were not that kind of person."

"No, I suppose that most of the people in our church wouldn't think a mite less of you, but there are some I expect who would, though I wouldn't care for their opinion."

Helen thought of herself as she had once been and smiled. "It's strange how different people look at things," she said. "Well I wish I could have gotten him to go with me before the meetings closed, but he wouldn't, he said, until he could earn a new suit. They don't pay him very much where he is and, with all my saving, it keeps us pretty short."

"I imagine," said Harry. "If I could help him—if you need any money any time I am saving a little and would be glad to lend it to you without usury."

"I am obliged for the offer," she replied, "and if it is necessary I wouldn't hesitate to ask you, but I think it will not be. I want you to come up some night next week and visit with my father, and get acquainted. I found out that he knew, or used to know, Mr. Greene."

"That's good, if you can get Mr. Greene to talk with him and interest himself in him, it will be a great deal better than me."

"Don't be too modest," was the reply. "I want him to know you both."

They had reached Mrs. Gray's. "Well," said Harry with a sigh, "this is the last of the meetings, and of my walking home with you."

"I'm glad of that," she replied, with an air of coquettishness she seldom used in his presence, but yet speaking with such soberness that he was startled by her words.

"What, you are glad of it!" he cried.

"Yes," and then after a short silence in which he was in vain trying to form words to express his feelings of surprise and indignation and dismay of heart, she continued, "I have been a great deal of bother to you."

"What, is that the reason?"

"Yes."

"Well, that is no good reason, and if that is all you can offer you must say you are sorry."

"Sorry for what?" she asked.

"That it is the last of the meetings, and—"

"Oh, is that all?" she asked as he hesitated, averting her face.

"No," he replied in a low emotional tone, "are you sorry that we shall not come home together, any more?"

"Why yes. I have enjoyed your company and your talks, and I shall never forget what you have done for me in bringing me into the meetings as you did."

There was not much said after that, and that which was, was too indistinct for an outsider's ears, as they stood, he with his back against one of the shade trees by the side of the walk, and she not far away, tapping her little foot upon the edge of it, looking around and above at the beautiful night, and at each other, feeling each that warm glow of heart, that quickening of the breath, and of the pulse, that unconsciousness of body, that ecstasy of mind, that throb of sympathy from heart to heart that two such young people may feel in each other's presence, and for which many words are not suitable.

And then the words of parting were spoken with feeling, so that they lingered and re-echoed pleasantly through each being. The alphabet is cold—words are as the bark of the dog and the harshness of the wind—but for the language of the soul which vibrates with meaning through the sound.

So, as Harry listened and recalled her words, he felt there had been no harshness, no apathy, no coolness in them. There had been words of feeling and there had been a shade of tenderness in them.

She was grateful to him, yes, for he had awakened her to a better life, and she realized that the change had been of great value, but had there been in them anything deeper that might correspond or respond to that feeling of affection in his heart.

He loved her—and madly, as youth loves. He had realized it strongly that night as they had stood together. He had longed to take her in his arms—he had scarce been able to keep back the eager burning

words of love, as he had touched her hand. There had been that quick magnetic shock which tells of passion's warmth, and he had felt the slight, unaffected trembling of her fingers as his hand slid off them to his side. He had not so long admired the graceful, sensuous movements of that slender form, he had not so often noted the flash of anger, the scorn, the joy and the sorrow upon those expressive features, and in those dark eyes, he had not so long been interested and sympathetic in that struggle to turn her soul from evil unto God, he had not so often felt the thrill from her touch, nor so eagerly tried to understand her moods and her words, without kindling somehow within himself—love—that love which, as I said, is most wonderful, and being wost wonderful, is most mysterious.

CHAPTER XX

“And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, should'st be driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.”

It was Saturday evening. Helen had that morning specified that evening as the one on which Harry should come to visit with her father and incidentally, of course, with herself, and he, having started somewhat early, was proceeding leisurely, enjoying the evening breeze after the confinement of the day.

The days at that time of the year are long so that the stars were just beginning to glow and twinkle brightly. He had just been reading an interesting book on astronomy that Mr. Greene, who was quite an enthusiast on the subject, had lent him, and with increasing knowledge there had come increased interest, wonder and reverence for that wonderful science of motion and distance and weight.

This verse had been given as a reference, and now, after two or three attempts he was able to repeat it.

How far above man the subject is—how inconceivable the distance, how incomparable the momentum and precision of motion, how much beyond realization the extent and volume of the universe, how wonderful the laws that govern and control it! And how

men have observed and figured and compared, how, for years, they have been converting these inconceivable distances and motions and weights into figures just as inconceivable but very precious in their prejudiced eyes.

To the grimy coal-heaver it matters little whether Jupiter has three moons or four, or whether Neptune is covered with ice. To the farmer it seems foolishness to estimate the distance to the North Star, or the vegetation that may exist on the moon. On many the stars shine almost unheeded and unnoticed. The moon rises, heralded only by the howl of the dog, the commonplace sun shines each day to make up the commonplace day.

“Lest thou shouldst be driven to worship them and serve them.” How needless that exhortation now, thought Harry. Men know better than to worship stars; but why?

If the savage had turned his face in worship from the black bloodthirsty savagery about him to the pure moon as it arose so silently into the skies and to the mysterious twinkling lights in the heavens, why should not men, knowing as they do the magnificence and beauty of the universe, reverence it more.

“Verily, a little knowledge puffeth up, and maketh vain,” and a little time brings apathy and indifference. If the stars should fade away, leaving a terrible impenetrable darkness; if the moon should tumble erratically about in the far distance; if the comets should come shrieking, twisting, burning past, and the sun should advance and glare upon the earth until the

trees should wither and men should lay panting like lizards in the sand of the desert, then would they awaken and acknowledge the mightiness of God.

No. Better that he hath divided them unto all nations under the whole heaven, that men may come to see through them a God of order, and not chaos, of love and care instead of terribleness and irrepressible power; better that from superstitions wonder they should lead men to knowledge; better that through their utility they should impress their purpose upon men; better that through their certainty men may be reassured; better that through their mightiness men may be humbled; better that through their beauty and purity their thoughts should sometimes be lifted up among the clouds, beyond and above among the shining worlds, and then up and up by faith, till in the light of heaven, in the presence of the Creator, they are only toys—or better, objects—wonderful only for their mission, the homes, the developers of human souls.

They are the shining lights, the stars of eternity; souls which live and shine while stars and suns fade away; souls for which the universe exists; souls, which from the heaven above outrival the brightness of the sun; souls which, as fine wheat, are the outcome of the world's harvest.

And how careless and thoughtless of their souls men are—how paltry so many of their desires; how unsensible so many of their plans; how vain so many of their boastings and their pride! How many, there in the city, in the frantic pursuit of one of the metals,

less wonderful than the common dirt which they stamp scornfully from their feet, care little for the other substance of the universe! How many, that their bodies may be finely clad, are uncaring what may come in contact with their souls! How many are sacrificing their hope of heaven, that their surroundings here may minister to their selfishness! How many, who for the sake of some standing among their fellows, seem to care little how their souls shall stand before their Creator! Why are they so subverting and dwarfing themselves?

But yet it is better than when men bowed themselves before a frog, or a grasshopper, or the image of a snake. The sun was steadily pointing out the wisdom and the resources of the earth, the stars which had sparkled on them, should still twinkle, twinkle on, that men might wonder, measure, figure on, until they became wise.

So while Harry had in body been traversing the distance between his own room and the house of Mrs. Gray his mind had been, almost unconsciously, reveling unrestrained in time and space.

He was shown to Helen's room, and at the knock upon her door she opened it, looking, he thought, very pale and anxious. She started at the sight of him as though she had expected some one else, and looked furtively down the hall as though undecided and much concerned about something, but shutting the door she took Harry's hat, apologizing for not having done so at first.

Then having opened up her father's room she

showed him how nicely she had it fixed, and drawing out her father's chair, which was the best, for Harry, she sat on a sofa chatting away as unconcernedly and bravely as possible, glancing frequently toward the door. Her father, she said generally came home by seven, and sometimes before that, and now it was almost eight o'clock, he must surely come soon.

And so presently there came sounds of footsteps outside. With a light and active bound she was at the door and had opened it. There stood the drunkard, his face inflamed by liquor, his hands trembling, with an awful expression of shame and disgrace, and yet of beseeching and entreaty.

So he stood hesitating, cringing, trembling, knowing he deserved scorn and contempt, and ready to flee from it, as the cringing cur would from the foot of its master, or even as it, to accept the glance of recognition or a word of forgiveness, and so creep in, emboldened yet shamefaced and crestfallen.

Helen's face turned scarlet, not from anger as it once would, but from shame and mortification and dismay. She had invited this young man to her home, anticipating a pleasant time; she had hoped that he might induce her father as he had her, to turn to Christianity; she had hoped that they might become friends, these two, that her father might find pleasure in his company, and that he might find encouragement in his sympathy and interest.

She had been encouraged to believe that he had conquered this terrible habit. She had planned only bright gain for the future. She had noted with joy

his straightening figure, the improving boldness of his eye, the decreasing roughness and uncouthness of language and manner. But now again was his tall form bent as hopelessness had bent it, now again had the tinge of liquor brought out those old lines and wrinkles of dissipation. It was a sore disappointment; but she reached out her hand and led him inside.

Then knowing not what to do with him, and catching sight of the flush of indignation upon Harry's face, she threw herself face downward upon the sofa.

But Harry did not look to her, the start, and look of terror that had come to the features of the despicable drunkard when he saw that Harry was present, a witness of his shame, recalled somehow an event of his childhood, he was searching with strange intentness the face of this man, and suddenly he sprang to his feet and grasped by him by the shoulder:

"I know where I've seen you," he cried in a strained, unnatural voice, "it was at Whisky Mike's saloon. I was looking down through the window—he was my father."

The drunkard gave a hoarse, horrified cry as though death had touched him, and stood reeling, his eyes glaring fearfully upon Harry from his blanched face. Thus for a moment they stood. Into Harry there had come such a rush of tumultuous feeling that he felt he would choke, while his heart beat with such an oppressive energy that he was as weak and helpless as the other, and could only stand gripping his throat.

To the murderer, realization brought strength first. Despite his intoxicated condition his muscles sud-

denly stiffened, and springing to the door he tore it open with such strength that the lock, catch and splinters from the door-jamb flew across the room—and he was gone.

An instant's indecision because of a frightened wondering look from Helen and Harry had followed. Down the stairs and around a corner he went, without realizing it, so that afterwards he wondered how it had come about, and he found himself running at full speed down an alley-way with the object of his chase not far ahead covering the ground as though possessed. He felt himself carried along by that strong surge of feeling within, as one feels himself carried upon a great ocean surge—irresistibly. He was conscious of no physical discomfort because of his exertions. The inequalities of the ground and the obstacles in his way seemed to pass from under him as easily and swiftly as though he were leaning from the window of a flying coach and taking note of them.

And with surprise he found himself summoning and trying to analyze his feeling toward this man, his father's murderer. He had often thought and wondered about him. He had, in the impulsiveness of his childhood, spoken bitterly against him, had stoutly declared his intentions to find him, when he got to be a man, and have him put in jail. He had then listened aversely to his mother's gentle words toward him; but her Christian reasoning had conquered, he had schooled himself to believe that if he should ever see him it would be without passion and hatred.

But why then did he pursue so fiercely? Had

enmity and malice sprung up again? Did that burning thrilling sensation of indignation and revenge denote the depravity of man's heart which cannot be covered up or a bloodthirstiness in him, so far distant from the heathen? Perhaps the anger he felt at the pain and disgrace he had caused this girl rankled as deeply and incensed him as much as that other more heinous, but less recent crime. But there had also been thoughts whirling through his head of justice and the law. Was it not his duty to prosecute him? Is it not said that justice should be satisfied? But yet would it be very satisfactory to punish this man? Would his life satisfy justice? Would it be his duty or his pleasure to clutch him by the throat if he could catch up with him? Could he prove to a judge that he recognized this man as a dangerous criminal—and what would Helen think of him for trying? These were his thoughts and with a surprising clearness he was going over them in his mind when suddenly his speed was checked and his attention was drawn from these matters by a large bull dog which, awakened by the flight of him who was so rapidly proceeding, came bounding over a fence, with fierce growls, just in time to grab him by the leg.

With a vindictive clutch and a strength he little realized his hands fastened upon the brute's throat. There was a fierce struggle, then the huge jaws relaxed and the dog fell over quivering and grasping for breath. Then with a sensation of uncontrollable rage he grasped it by the skin of the back and hurled it over the fence from whence it had come.

Then he went on, but more slowly, bareheaded and puffing, until he reached the intersection of another street, where he halted and looked every way. The drunkard had escaped. There was no use to run or to look now. Perhaps it was for the best. So he retraced his steps and secured his hat, and for the first time examined his wound. The dog in its fierceness had bitten with more eagerness than judgment, so that although the skin had been broken by his teeth and smarted greatly, there was little damage done.

But now he was in a very unenviable position. He had become aware that his lungs were almost bursting from his exertions, so he had sat down upon the edge of a walk, and clasped his hands upon his sides in an effort to get back his breath and strength, and he began to see the awkwardness of the situation in which he found himself. He felt that it was his duty to go back to Helen and try to comfort and explain. But no; that was what he could not do. He could not tell her that this man whom she must call father was a murderer, had taken the life of his father. How terrible a thing murder was! How that blanched, terror-stricken face had haunted his brain these many years! At Whisky Mike's he had seen him—yes—how strange that he had remembered! No, he could not tell her that! No words could be a comfort to her with that knowledge. He could not look into her face. The father's curse must not come down and blast the life of his child. This crime must be kept concealed. He would keep it so. He had no desire for revenge. If there was uneasiness at his heart now and strange con-

flict he would quiet it, he would pray, he would forgive. He had no hatred; he could still love the murderer's daughter; but—could he deceive her? Could he bridge this gulf that lay between them so that she might not see it? Could he hope that she might never find out this crime? Would she believe that the shame of his drunkenness had caused her father's disappearance? What would she think of his own actions? Should he tell her the truth or should he sacrifice principle for a moment to save her?

Torn by these conflicting hopes and fears, it was not until long after his breathing had become natural and his temples had ceased to throb that he came in sight of Mrs. Gray's place.

He had decided he would not go in, he could not trust himself to meet Helen, he felt guilty, and besides he was nervous, his wrists twitched, he felt sure that his eyes would betray the secret, that the look upon his face would frighten her. But possibly he could see her. She might be looking from her window or at least be in sight so that he could gain some idea of her feeling from her expression or action. He hoped she was not in suspense and would soon give up his return and retire for the night. He made his way around to where he could see her window. The curtain was up and the lamp was burning, but so far as he could see the little room was empty. She was probably lying upon the sofa as he had left her, weeping. Then suddenly he was startled by a noise, and she was by his side, emerging from the shadow of some trees where she had been watching for him.

She was bareheaded and very pale, and as he took her by the arm and tried to induce her to go inside he found she was trembling violently. "Where is he?" she cried. "Couldn't you catch him? Why did you chase him? Where did he go?" He answered nothing; but led her up to her little room, and warned her of the heavy dew and of the danger of getting chilled.

There she repeated the questions, and accused him of having been cruel in driving her father away. He had been drinking but he might have been yet reclaimed. He had fallen, but he was sorry for it and with right treatment would have tried again. He should have spoken kindly to him and tried to help her.

In her grief she was accusing him wrongly enough, but he was very willing to bear it and asked her forgiveness for his haste, and told her that her father might yet come back, that he would do all in his power to have it so, and was pleased to see her become calmer and more rational, though he saw that she was not satisfied and she had looked at him so queerly, he knew there was something in his face that caused it, and he averted it and tried to look at a magazine. How he wished he was away, that there might be nothing more said, that he could divert her mind.

But she had already the question upon her lips which he dreaded so. "What did you say to him, it was about seeing him in some saloon, and then he cried out so and jerked open the door, see how he broke it! and then running that way, why should he do it, and why did you follow him the way you did?"

At this Harry made a pretense of fixing the broken door not answering her question, but his reluctance only increased her anxiety.

"You only tell the truth," she said, leaning forward with an expression of tenseness upon her features, "When did you see him—to-night?"

"Oh, no, it was long ago," he replied as lightly as possible, "it was when I was a little boy."

"And you still remembered him?"

"Yes, it was strange, but the expression on his face somehow made him look familiar, and then all at once it came to me who he was, and I spoke to him almost before I thought. Some people think that our memories are eternal, and that every act, everything we see or hear, or do, is impressed upon our minds, never to be erased, and in proof of that they——"

He was trying to draw her attention from those hastily spoken and now regretted words. He had hoped that she had not noticed them. But she interrupted him.

"You said you were looking down through the window, that seems strange too. What was going on? What was he doing?"

"My father was down there, and I had come there looking for him. I remember that my mother was at home sick——"

"But what was my father doing that you should have so noticed him."

He must tell the truth, as she said, but he felt that the inevitable was closing in upon him, and looked wildly about for an escape. How numb his brain was

that he could think of nothing to say which would satisfy her. It was in his mind to flee even as the guilty old man had fled; but he could not bring himself to do it, it would be cowardly. He could not avoid her question, she had repeated it.

"There was a fight in there, and——"

"Was he in it?"

"Yes, but——"

"Was your father?"

"Yes."

"Someone was hurt?"

"My father was stabbed, so that he died afterwards."

"And he was one of them; oh, did he do it?"

There was no answer to that, but there was no denial, and she read in his eye that it was the truth.

She lay back then upon the sofa, motionless and her face deathly white, and Harry, thinking she had fainted ran to bring water and Mrs. Gray. Then after a great deal of confusion and excited running about of the landlady and the servant girls whom she had aroused, Helen seemed to revive, and saying that she was all right and wished to be left alone, Harry could do nothing but go home, wishing heartily enough that he had never left there that evening.

CHAPTER XXI

It is well that necessity urges us to labor. For several days Helen did not go to the store, the shock and pain of mind she had sustained had been severe and as a result she felt weak and indisposed. In her waking hours her thought was centered upon her father, he was a criminal, an outcast from society, ever haunted, fleeing from a guilty conscience, drinking, she thought she could realize better why, now. Maybe, also, he was haunted by the men in blue. Harry had pursued him that night, she knew, and he might even now be instigating detectives and the police in the search. Somehow she hardly thought this probable. He had not seemed angry or revengeful and yet he might have only been acting this to her face. She actually thought this, and she sometimes sat moody and frowning as she pictured in her mind, her father brought to justice. She blamed herself greatly that she had given way to her grief on that night, so that she had given no word of entreaty against his going, and so that he would not now think her angry or at least hopeless of him. She pictured to herself over and over what she should have done. She should have taken him to his room. She should have shown him somehow that she still sympathized with and cared for him. Then on the morrow she could have

plead with him and encouraged him to try again. Though he had fallen he had not given up all hope or he would not have come back to her as he had— But now he was hopeless, yes, he must be desperate. He was liable to end his life. She felt she would do it if she were in his place.

She had the servants buy some papers, and searched them through anxiously and yet fearfully. It seemed to her that certainly after that mad cry, and that desperate run, there must have come something as a desperate ending; but she found nothing.

No; the misery locked up in that breast found its way to no newspaper. There was no call, no stir of a suicide, but there had burst into Heck's saloon down on K—— street that same night a ghastly-faced, hoarse-voiced man, who had tried desperately to choke and drown his soul with drink.

But now Helen could not lie still and think of her sorrow and regret. She had had a chance. She had not succeeded in reclaiming him, but she had tried, and she had shown him that she cared for him. He had had the choice of good and evil brought strongly before him and he had not chosen the good—he must suffer.

The forenoon of the second day she spent mostly in prayer. He was a murderer, but yet that could not shut him from the grace of God. He was bound to drink, by a chain which seemingly human strength could not break. He was doubtless torn and distressed by an awakened conscience, but peace and forgiveness could come for all that, and oh! she peti-

tioned that it might, that this flight might bring him to religion and not back to his old habits.

So feeling that his destiny was in the hands of God and himself, and greatly comforted, she moved the things from his room back into hers, leaving it bare as before—not without tears but with a softened grief and without rebellion of heart.

Then, upon the following day, she took her place at the store. Harry's face brightened up as she came in and at the first opportunity he tried to tell her he was sorry for the grief he had caused her, though in truth it had been unknowingly on his part. He tried to explain that he held no hatred toward her father. That he had not thought what he was doing when he had set out in pursuit of him, and that he did not intend to prosecute him. That the crime was committed under the influence of liquor so that he was not so much accountable.

He tried thus to comfort her, but it was a very delicate subject and there was little comfort in it, so that at the end he was not sure whether he had been wise in bringing it up at all.

She seemed in no way resentful toward him. She acknowledged that the guilty man's conscience and fears had been the cause of his flight more than any words or actions of Harry's. She thanked him, while tears stood in her eyes, for his efforts to console and set her at ease. But yet the cold claminess of death seemed even yet to extend up to and separate them; the horror of murder had come overshadowing and cooling the brightness of interest and friendship.

Harry had foreseen and feared this sensation. He had fought it on his part, he had tried and overcome it on hers, but yet as though it were the hand of fate their lives seemed to diverge and separate from that time.

Why is it that one soul can feel the chill of another though words of anger be not spoken, though the eye seems not to have changed, nor the smiles to have diminished? By what hidden power does it so easily and effectually throw up a barrier against so close approach?

That barrier, unseen and mysterious, had arisen between Helen and himself. Their greetings in the store came to be less frequent. He was invited no more to her room. He saw her at church each Sunday. He spoke to her and talked with her. He sometimes walked with her to his corner upon Saturday nights as they used to do. But all the time there was something between them, distrust, resentment, a feeling of illness at ease, antagonism, because of that old injury, or what—perhaps neither of them could have told, the warm sympathy, yea love, had been cruelly—not destroyed, not utterly quenched, but greatly diminished. Both felt in themselves and in the other not less plainly an invisible but strong reserve.

So Helen seemed now to care little for any friend. She associated but little with the other clerks. They had ceased to tease her and paid but little attention to her. She performed her duties at the store steadily and seemingly more mechanically or more with a cold

philosophy of endurance. She bore the heat uncomplainingly and seemed unaffected by trouble or worry. She generally went immediately to her room from the store and seemed to be content to read or to sew in her little leisure time. Sometimes she went to a lecture or a musicale if it were suitable to her purse, and her attendance upon the church services was quite regular. Indeed she was living a somewhat apathetic but yet calm and satisfactory life, recognizing the great infinite Being above, feeling that she was perhaps thus doing his will, and caring little how long she should thus live if he saw fit to bring no change.

There was, however, one thing that troubled her. So far as her father was concerned and so far as her power had been, she felt that she had done, or at least had tried to do her duty. But there was still her mother.

The gospel of love had driven the hatred out of her heart. It had reconciled her and brought forgiveness. But her mother did not know it. She had done nothing as yet to show her her change in feeling. Maybe, though scarce likely, that mother's heart was now aching to hear the words of forgiveness and friendship. Maybe, disappointed by the vanity of the world, she might be led to higher things. Maybe she was sick and discouraged and badly in need of care and sympathy, and would rejoice if her daughter should return.

It was because of these thoughts that she one evening stepped from the street-car in front of that cottage which she had left in anger.

A flood of thoughts and recollections came sweeping

over her. How familiar the house looked! She could imagine her mother, sitting in her room, reading some novel or working out some creation upon linen with her needle and silk, and perhaps her stepfather sitting there, low-browed and sullen, poring over his paper and raising his voice now and then to make some remark or read some headline, as was his habit, and as she so well remembered him doing after that miserable night at the dance.

Or perhaps company was still lingering inside and she could recall the animated, well-modulated tones and the silvery laughter as she had heard it so many times. Or maybe her mother was out somewhere. In either case it would be somewhat awkward for her. Well she must find out; and, advancing, she rang the bell.

How long it seemed since she had entered that door! And now she is a shop girl. How she has changed since that time! She hears steps along the hall, a new girl comes to the door.

"I want to see Mrs. Leigh, I haven't a card."

"Oh, an' shall I tell her your name is ——?"

"Tell her a young lady that used to know her wishes to see her," replied Helen, and advancing into the hall she continued, "I will go on into the parlor," which she did, leaving the surprised girl to explain to her mistress as how, whosoever she was she seemed to feel right at home.

It was with a beating heart that Helen listened to the rustle of a dress and the approaching step of her mother, and she breathed a prayer for courage.

A moment and she stood in the doorway, a little older yet the same woman, no glad welcoming, but the expression of expected pleasure on her face changing to angered surprise.

"Mother, I have come back," Helen cried, rising to her feet.

"Oh, the girl said you was making yourself at home."

"Yes, everything seemed so natural I came right in here."

"Why did you come back; get starved out?" and a sneering smile formed on her lips.

"No, I am getting along all right; I don't get very big wages, but——"

"Did you think you would come back and take your place in society again?" interrupted the mother coldly.

"No, I don't want to, I am among better society," replied Helen calmly.

"What!" cried the mother, betrayed from her coldness, "where are you staying?"

"At Mrs. Gray's on —— street."

"Pshaw, there's no society there."

"The people who are my friends belong to the Methodist church over on —— avenue, and they are the nicest people I ever saw."

"So you're a Methodist." And that exasperating smile again came to her face. "Well, I'm glad you like them."

"Yes, I like them," repeated Helen, her face flushing, "and I can tell you that their religion is—well that's the best way to live, I never enjoyed life as I

have since I joined the church, and then too you're ready to die." No one knows what an effort it cost for this young girl to calmly speak these words, when that same look on her mother's face a short year before would have crazed her with passion.

"Pshaw," was the response, "is that what you came to tell me?"

"Yes—you taught me there was nothing in religion and I wanted to tell you that I have found there is—I—I used to hate you but I don't any more."

"You want to make up then, and come home, is the sum of it all."

"No, I don't want to come home—I'm better off"—biting her lips because of the implied selfishness of her motive. Could she not say something to show that she was not seeking to attain her old position, in a cloak of religious penitence. "I would not come home, I say, but I would like to be a friend of yours—you need not recognize me as a daughter. I just want you to know that I haven't anything against you and don't want you to have against me."

The look on Mrs. Leigh's face was that of incredulity and, advancing from the doorway where she had all the time been standing to the middle of the room, she said, "If I'd met you at the door to-night, you'd never have come inside, but as you were in, I've heard what you had to say. You claim you don't want to come back home, and it's a good thing, because it's impossible. Clarence has—don't like you, and gave orders that you should never come inside the door, and it would be better if you leave before he comes. If

you need money I'll give you some," and she held out a bill as she would have to any mendicant.

"No," said Helen, putting her hands behind her, "I do not want money, but, mother, you will forgive me for the way I used to talk and act,—we will be friends," she pleaded.

"We will be neither friends nor enemies, because there will be no intercourse between us. I have nothing against you," was the steadily spoken answer. "You must go now." And Helen knew the interview was at an end and departed.

What the feelings of the mother were as she thus sent away her daughter no one could tell. She seemed cold and formal, and unmoved, except for a fleeting look of surprised admiration as Helen had with such dignity and grace drawn back from the proffered money. She had said, "I have nothing against you," but in a tone that showed no warm forgiveness, but only that time had changed anger and hatred into cold apathy.

So it was with an aching heart that Helen left her; and yet she had dared hope for nothing better. She had obeyed and quieted that impulse within her—she had asked and given forgiveness and had controlled anger. And thus satisfied she returned quietly to Mrs. Gray's.

CHAPTER XXII

The life of the shop girl is hard. The never-ceasing din and chatter is an irritant to the nerves; the confinement and close, insipid, lifeless air of the store brings the pallid, colorless face; the monotony and hopelessness of change, enervates; the unending strain of politeness and of answering countless questions, the effort to overcome or humor the multitudinous whims and caprices, drains the energy and vitality from the body.

Then, when the sweltering hot days of August come, seemingly more intense in their heat than the long midsummer that has already so run down the overworked girls; then in the unrelieved glare and reflected heat, in the humidity and impure air of the store and street, do they envy you who have the breeze and the freshness of the country, more than they do those who are rich and famous.

This time had come and with especial fierceness it seemed. Seven of the girls were prostrated by the heat, and at last Helen was forced to give up and go home. She did not faint as some of the girls had, but she declared that if she remained she would die. Her face was flushed and red, her temples were throbbing, her breath came quickly and she seemed thoroughly exhausted.

So they took her to her room—it had been only by

force of will that she had left it that morning;—but she did not improve and the doctor ordered that she be taken to a hospital for he saw that the deadly typhoid had fastened itself upon her.

There she rapidly sank into unconsciousness, and lay hovering between life and death, sometimes talking wildly of the store—of Johnny Oleson—of Eva Black—of her old life. She was dancing and the music seemed so fast—how tired she was; and then the gentle nurse would hold the waving, tremulous hands and stroke the fevered forehead, smoothing again and again the tossed coverlids.

And sometimes she lay so quiet that it would seem that eternal unconsciousness had come upon her; but nature and the doctors conquered and the wandering, unsettled brain began to brighten and clear, the fever to subside and the wasted, helpless body to recuperate.

And then Harry, who had come each day to inquire of her, could stand at the door and look in for a few minutes; and she, lying with her thin, white face outlined against her dark curling hair—looking for all the world like an angel—would turn at the sound of his voice, and smile and tell him she was better. Then one Sunday afternoon he was permitted to sit by her bed a half hour, while the nurse rested, and he took her white hand in his and stroked it and even pressed it to his lips, while they talked of the time when she would be well again. How short the minutes seemed—they had only begun to talk when the nurse came back and he must go—but still he was very glad for those min-

utes, for there had seemed to come back to them as they had talked, the old undiminished sympathy. Time had served to deaden the emotions of horror and distress stirred up by the discovery of this black crime which of all things is most awesome and most black, but it had seemed also to be setting its seal upon the young lives, saying with an unpleasant undeniable power: You are separate, blood has flowed between; until suffering and weakness had come on one side, and anxiety and a deeper sympathy on the other. Time had almost vanished from one life: as the soul slipped so nearly from its grasp it had seemed to elude the old rankling injury and the old embarrassing scars of the past, and it could stand out again with undiminished and unhampered powers.

With great joy Harry felt this. He read in her eyes the absence of the uneasiness and almost distrust that he had seen there lately. He listened to the silvery voice, recognizing even in its weakness that it was again flowing smoothly, unruffled by the cold wind of doubt; he noted with a thrill as he took her hand that lay so contentedly in his, that there was not the unpleasant twitch nor the nervous passiveness which, in spite of us, will betray our feelings. He had said good-bye gladly and had gone out into the sunshine, feeling that it had never seemed so bright and that the streets had never seemed so full of beauty and interest.

At last the day came when Helen, pronounced well, was dismissed from that world of the sick and helpless, and of quietness and patience, to the great out-

side world of hurry and thoughtlessness. It was with something of regret that she took the last look about the little room and said good-bye to some of the other sufferers with whom she had lately become acquainted. Then the nurse, to whom she had become greatly attached, inquired as to whether she had friends or relatives to whom she could go, and was answered in the negative, but Helen told her that she had a little room and that she thought she could get her old position back again. The nurse had kindly hoped that this would be so and had given Helen a small sum of money from her own slender store, then giving her hand a last impulsive pressure between both of her's, had spoken a quiet good-bye and turned back to her own life of quietness and self-sacrifice, leaving Helen not a little heartened by her kindness and interest.

She took a car and alighted within a few blocks of the store. She must see at once about her place. Harry had said that he thought she could get it again but still he did not know. What if she couldn't? But she did not allow herself to think about that. She was drawing in great breaths of air and looking about at the crowd with enjoyment and with some wonder as she had used to do. They seemed all so busy. None had missed her—she was as one dead and come to life again. But what did they care; verily, she thought with a smile, if one were resurrected from the dead they would not believe.

She entered with some awe, as one will into a place that was once familiar, and made her way to

the manager's office. He was busy but at length found time to inquire what she wanted. Upon asking for her old place he replied somewhat crossly that he had hired another girl and there was no vacancy. She then asked if there wasn't any sort of a place for her in one of the other departments; but he said no, the store was overrun with girls and he was sorry but he could not give her anything. As she turned to go he, evidently a little ashamed of himself, asked in a different tone as to her recovery and said he hoped she would soon find a position. He had evidently been worried about something for he was usually polite and interested, especially in the case of old employees. But, be that as it may, Helen saw that it was of no use for her to look for a position from him, and with a pang of dismay and disappointment she made her way out into the salesroom. There was Henry Jones as natural as life, showing his neckties, with those same little smirks and smiles; there was little May Kiser showing her handkerchiefs and Jessie Barlow standing just as she had six weeks before; there was Jack Worth too. Eva Black was nowhere to be seen nor was Cora Childs. Ah, death had come to the one and the other had returned to the country home from which she came. And there was Harry Spencer amongst his shoes, showing, trying on and changing box calfs, patent leathers, tans, cordovans, congress and laces. Busy as ever, all of them. She did not see how they could have stood it all this time—it seemed at least a year since she had left. There was a girl whom she had never seen before in her

place, handling the ribbons and there were other new faces.

Pushing in with the crowd she spoke briefly to several of the old clerks with whom she had been most intimate, until she came to Harry's department. He was busily engaged in tightening some gaiters about the ankles of a large, aristocratic-looking woman, who sat glaring down upon him through her glasses with a wrinkle of haughty displeasure and impatience upon her forehead, and Helen could not help but laugh at the start he gave when, happening to glance up for a moment, he saw her. Without any ado he left the old lady to stare at the floor and came and spoke to her, congratulating her on her recovery, saying in a tone that brought the color to her cheeks that she looked real well and that he was overjoyed to see her. She told him that she could not get her place again, at which his face lengthened visibly, but he had no further time to talk with her for the old lady was angrily looking about for the manager and there were other customers waiting, so back to his task he went hoping for another word with her presently.

But no interval of leisure came and at last, as he glanced up, he saw with a sinking heart and with a feeling of hatred against the insensible foot coverings and especially against that obnoxious old woman, that she was gone.

CHAPTER XXIII

Helen had gone to Mrs. Gray's, but had been dumb-founded to find it Mrs. Gray's no longer. The house was now kept by an untidy, florid-faced Irish woman, who informed her that Mrs. Gray had "cleared out somewhere, and without payin' off her rint too, but now that the house was kept by herself, as was a respectable, honest woman, she could get a clean, beautiful back room for three dollars and a half, or one to the front, and larger, for five; an' fer her board she could eat at her tables for two dollars and a half."

She was proceeding to volubly express the excellence of her fare when Helen interrupted and asked about her old room and her furniture.

When at last the new landlady had comprehended what was meant she was profuse in her exclamations of surprise and anger against that shameful thing that "she would so chate a poor girl," and she earnestly pleaded her ignorance of such furniture and belongings having ever existed.

"Why didn't Mrs. Gray store them for me," cried Helen aghast. "Harry—I mean—a person told me when I was sick that she was storing them for me and that she expected me to come back into my room again as soon as I was well."

"A divil a cent does she care if you come into any room alive or well I'm a thinking, an' as fer storin'

your fixin's I've a mind to think she stored them all in her pocket-book, fer the house wuz empty of the last stick of 'em," and as proof she took Helen to the room and showed her it, truly enough, changed and refurnished and reoccupied.

Suddenly, however, as Helen was gazing about her in blank dismay, she clapped her great hands together and cried out that "the owner must 'ave got them, she wint away a-oweing him an' he took 'em thinking they wer' her's." Yes she was sure that must have been the way of it, and if she would just go and see him and tell him how it was he would surely give them back to her, and then when she had them once back she must come and stay with her, she had another little room empty just across the hall an' four doors down an' she would make it a little cheaper to her for the trouble she had been in with that other dishonest thing.

So, a little reassured and somewhat suspicious of this volatile old woman, Helen took the address of the owner, which was in a different part of the city, and set out immediately to find him. This she succeeded in doing after some trouble, but upon stating her errand the man became very wrathful and swore that he knew nothing of the matter, and, speaking of Mrs. Gray with an oath, said that she had gone, nobody knew where, and if she had left anything of value behind her he had had the bad luck not to find it.

Then, upon further queries from Helen, he began to grow insulting in his language and so she left him, feeling, as she had never felt before, utter hopelessness.

ness and dismay. She was alone, no friend to help her. She thought of Harry Spencer, he would help her if he could, so would some of the other clerks, perhaps. And there were her friends in the church, but they could not give her what she needed most, employment, and, independent as she had always been, she shrank from the thought of asking their aid. However, she knew that she need not starve. She would look for occupation but if she could not find it she would go to them; and this thought served to comfort her a little.

She had no further clue to aid her in searching for her goods. She realized that it would have been easy for either of the three—the two landladies or the owner—to have made off with them, and she believed any of them capable of doing it with a good grace, and so in her despair, she had already given up hope of finding them. It was even now dark, she was in a strange part of the city and had eaten no supper. But for this last she did not care, she felt that she could not eat anyhow. However, she bought a cup of coffee at a sort of lunch stand and had started to walk back, to save carfare, when the thought came to her, Why should she? She was very tired, it would be no extra pleasure to lodge under the roof of the Irishwoman—though that had for a long time been a home to her it was now no more so than any of these places she was passing, and then, too, the rates there for a single night and a meal would be too high for her straitened circumstances.

She stopped in the shadow of a building and

counted over her money. With a queer feeling she realized that she had never been so poor. She thought of the past with a grim smile: once so rich and careless, then at school careless and happy, then in the store; that had been the best part of her life. But what of the present? What did God mean her to do? But even with the thought of the higher Being, fears were struggling. Would she need to go hungry, would this poverty, this miserable deadening lack which she had witnessed in some parts of the city—always with a shudder—be her lot? Would she need to live friendless and— No, she had friends—what was she thinking of. It was foolish in her to be so weak—but she was so tired.

She aroused herself with an effort. Two rough-looking young men had been watching her, and now they were coming toward her. She stepped out into the light and walked rapidly down the street until she had lost them in the crowd. Then, looking about, she found a house where she might stay very cheaply and, buying a paper, went to the miserable little room allotted to her.

There she sat until midnight studying the advertisements, selecting those that seemed at all suitable and that were not at too great a distance—and trembling with fear at the sounds of revelry and commotion about her. For she found that the house was not of a very good reputation. There were a good many rough men about, and some girls, brazen and grinning. She could hear the shouts, the stamping of feet and the coarse oaths of the former, mingled with shrill grat-

ing laughter and quarrelsome bantering voices of the gentler sex. Then at times someone would scrape upon an old violin and there would be singing and shuffling of feet so that she knew they were dancing. But at last they began to quiet down, and after looking again to see that her door was fastened, and having set the chairs and all the movable furniture against it, she ventured to go to sleep, and in the morning was glad to get away unharmed.

She found a restaurant near, where she ate a light breakfast, and then started out in her quest of work. Surely she would find some. Morning had brought some hope as it always does. The morning had opened misty and cloudy, with a pleasant breeze from the lake, and the sun peeping out now and then, just to show people that it still existed; and once, sitting in a broad window seat in an upstairs office, waiting to see the proprietor, she had become absorbed in looking out upon a distant part of the city where the sun had seemed to focus itself like a great searchlight and for the time forgot where and what she was.

But gradually her failures and disappointments were driving away all tendencies toward day dreams or the pleasures of sight-seeing. One can, if one is light-hearted and determined and has some courage, pass over the first, and the second, and the third, maybe, with only an exclamation of displeasure, or a backward glance of scorn, but after that we go out with a sigh or in silence and trudge away doggedly, with hope lagging sadly behind—spurring ahead with a rush now and then, but at a rebuff dropping listlessly

behind again, and leaving to necessity or duty the leading of the way.

Helen had arranged to go to the stores first, preferring to clerk but invariably it seemed that the vacancies had been filled just before she came or that the girl who came in just before her was chosen, and she wondered to herself how she had come to lose that provoking quarter of an hour that seemed to stand between her and success, or if it were possible in any way to make it up. The city seemed to be overrun, as her old employer had said, with girls, and there were so many kinds, some bold and seemingly careless—tossing their heads and quarrelling as they waited, handling office belongings carelessly, roasting unmercifully any office boy who must needs make his appearance, and when informed that their services are not needed, going out savagely scratching their boots on the floor and muttering unkind things about the proprietor in semi-audible tones. Others with thin, peaked faces, and clothes from which care had failed to erase all evidence of much service, sitting quietly, fixing their eyes steadily upon the man as he came in, answering the questions just as steadily, and if refused going out as calmly as though this was a part of her day's duties, and something to which she was used; or if, perchance, she was accepted her eyes would brighten in a way you would not have thought of, and she would invariably begin to take off her hat and to look about for a peg on which to hang it, with a sigh as though her work was done and she could rest.

And there were still others who were new in the city,

now and then one just from the country, ridiculed and yet secretly admired for her round, fresh-hued cheeks and her graceful, conscious manners; or one who had been compelled by some turn of fate to leave a quiet home and push in with a crowd which she had always before been taught to avoid; and these would sit, shocked at the manners of the rougher ones, and at the manager's questions would flush and stammer confusedly, and if he said no, would give a big gulp of disappointment, or if their hopes had been too high, would fumble awkwardly at the door as they went out because of the blinding tears, and if he said yes, would look about upon the rejected ones with such an unconscious air of condescension and triumph, mingled with pity, that only the worst ones could help but be glad with her, and they would be furious.

Then Helen saw one or two who evidently had come from the higher air of society, the breath of which still clung to their richer garments. One had sat, disdainful of her surroundings, reading a letter which seemed unpleasant, bringing a frown again and again to her proud but handsome face. She had hardly looked at the manager and when, to the surprise of everybody else, he offered her the place, she accepted condescendingly as though conferring a favor. Another, a slight, blue-eyed girl, with curling yellow hair, attired in a perfect-fitting gray costume and with costly rings upon her fingers, seemed much interested in the other applicants and won the hearts of all by her smile and quiet but witty answer to a rough joke aimed at her by an ignorant uncultured rival, who did

not know good manners. She did not get the place sought for and though evidently disappointed bowed with perhaps the same pleasant graceful little bow with which she had been wont to receive company or accept of a dance, and to Helen this was more pathetic than tears. She wondered what could have come between this girl and her old position, a drunken ball, a hated step-father, her pride—hardly any of these. Whatever it was she thought it must have been unjust, and she pitied the girl, feeling at the same time that she hungered to be acquainted with her, to be friends with her. What a friend she would make! She wondered at herself for feeling so. She had only barely spoken to her as she went out, trying to offer a word of sympathy and noting again that little smile that somehow seemed so pleasant. She knew nothing of her, but yet she hurried to the sidewalk and watched her walk quickly away, with a strange regret at her heart. Maybe we, when in another world, look down upon our path in life and see, without regret, where we have missed a friend, or where walking for a distance side by side with one whose love would have been as gold to us, we have been unable or else neglected to stretch out our hand to them—maybe we shall be wiser then, and will have more friends to cheer us.

But now Helen had applied at all of the stores unsuccessfully and she stopped to look over the other places on her list. What a mixed lot they were; how she hated to think of accepting some of them; but she must, and must will bear no arguing. She ate her

dinner at another restaurant, thinking, with a grim smile, that if this kept up she could give a tourist pointers on where and what to eat.

Then she started out and at the second place was offered a position in an office to do light work, but at wages that would have been impossible for her to live on.

On declining it on this ground, she was offered more upon conditions that brought the flush of shame and indignation to her cheeks and she hurriedly left the establishment, hearing, as she did so, the amused laugh of the man who had wanted to hire a girl.

She was disgusted with searching as one is nauseated with what has made him sick. She had, during the morning, passed through districts of shame, drunken men had called after her, she had stood insolent stares in the street cars, had heard floor walkers and clerks remark as she passed of her beauty; but this last was hard to be born. Her body, enfeebled by disease was aching with weariness, her spirits were crushed and beaten down by the constant disappointment of the morning, and hope seemed to have slunk in the background, as it will unless strengthened by reinforcements, and so she said to herself she would go no farther.

Luckily, one of the city parks was not far distant and she made her way to it and dropped into one of the seats. What a path she had made over the city that day! Once she had been within a few blocks of the old familiar store, and had almost gone over to see Harry, but she had been trying then to make up

that foolish fifteen minutes and was afraid if she stopped she would lose the next place. Then she had gone on and fate had seemed to lead her farther by each tantalizing elusive prize until now she was miles away from him and she could only wish in vain that she had gone.

How he would have been shocked if he had known of her struggles, insults and disappointments that day; how he would strive if he could be with her to cheer her; how well he always talked, how easily and confidently did he always bring to her remembrance that Friend who was the joint friend of them both. As she thought of this, tears came to her eyes and the quiet cry that followed did her good. Something hard within her softened, so that when she dried her eyes again her resentment at the world was gone and she looked about her at the beauty with enjoyment.

People were coming to the park on bicycles, on horseback and in carriages, and for a long time she watched them with interest, as they laughed and chatted and flirted, and sighed, and exclaimed at the beauty about them. For a time she became one of them and forgot her miserable self, only that she was resting and that it seemed very delightful.

But the approach of evening brought her back to herself and she bravely set out again. It was an unfavorable time, for people were beginning to think about their suppers, but still one cannot tell when one will be lucky, and after all there is some excitement in such a chase such as spurs the gold-seeker from one bluff to another; and then, against his will almost, to

another and another; and Helen, emerging slowly and dejectedly from one place would gradually quicken her pace as she would fix in her mind some place that might be the place for which she had sought all day, or if the next place on her list was at a distance she would perhaps stand undecided until some car came clanging along and then would step aboard and relinquish to the conductor with a little gasp another of those little coins which were becoming more and more precious to her as they became fewer.

Into factories, stores and workshops she had gone that day and had even applied at a restaurant where a sign in the window donated the fact that they lacked a dishwasher, but once inside she had wished herself out, and had not been disappointed when the head cook looked sourly at her and told her she was not strong enough and was too high falutin' for such work, which she did not try to deny. She had also gone into one place where they needed a stenographer, but, upon being shown the work, admitted that she could not do it. The man had evidently been touched by her white face and expression of weariness as she said this for he spoke very kindly to her and offering her some fruit from his desk told her of a woolen and knitting factory across the block which often needed hands, and he even sat down and wrote a line to the manager for her and gave her careful directions how to find him, regretting that she should have to do such work and yet glad to assist her to it if it were necessary.

Helen thanked him and went out into the street undecided, she had vowed that this was to be her last

place and yet another had turned up seemingly only to beckon to and mock her. It was almost dark and the street looked so poor—it was probably dangerous too for a girl unattended—but she had, earlier in the day, forcibly put away her fear and that did not bother her so much as dread of another disappointment. The man had probably left and she could not see him, she had said to herself before. Now only this once should she risk being struck again as it were, another blow, and then rest. Another glance at the paper in her hand decided her. She would go. Quickening her steps she presented herself at the office, and the man, after alternately looking at her and the paper she had presented, three or four times, offered her a position at four dollars a week.

This was nothing big, but Helen accepted it at once and without questions. Fate had seemed to laugh at her all day, but now she could laugh at fate, she thought. She inquired where she might find a room for the night, and the man, after looking sharply at her as though trying to decide her social position and tastes, told her of a place three blocks away, not very good, but respectable enough.

Helen thanked him and started mechanically away, just as if she was still hunting a place, she told herself; and at last, stumbling and trembling from weakness she reached the cheap hotel to which she had been directed and sinking into the first chair in the office told the old woman in charge that she must have a room.

Thinking that if she must, she must, and ascertain-

ing beyond doubt that she had some money, the landlady led the way up a dingy, crooked flight of stairs, and lighted a greasy, undersized oil lamp for her in one of the rooms.

Helen gave her directions to wake her in the morning and then sat down upon the bed. The only chair in the room was occupied by the sputtering lamp, there was a fragment of rag carpet in front of the bed, and the bed looked as though it had been made up by a one-armed man. A chimney hole gaped black and fierce at the foot of the bed. These things she noted carelessly, they seemed to bother her less than they would have girls who had never known plush carpets, hand paintings, china cases or bamboo and silk draught screens. She was wondering where she was, for in her wandering about she had again lost herself.

She was set down again as though from the sky, in a new situation—she must make new friends and a new home; she must adjust herself to different circumstances. What the near future would bring forth was a conjecture too great for her tired brain to grapple with. Presently she was thinking of her old friends, the old room faded from before her eyes, and then she ceased to think, and presently was startled by the shrieking voice of the old woman—three steps below her door.

CHAPTER XXIV

As she went down to her work, daylight, revealing the neighborhood in its true light, brought her something of a feeling of dismay. The buildings were old and dilapidated, covered with the smoke and grime of years. Refuse lay unheeded in the narrow streets and choked the alleys; the air was blackened and clouded by great volumes of smoke pouring from the factory stacks, and piles of cinders and slack lay in unsightly heaps about the engine-house doors and in corners of vacant lots.

The inhabitants were, as she saw them, ignorant, shiftless and poverty-stricken. Children were beginning to swarm like bees out of an old tenement, as she passed it, tousle-headed, ragged, and with a guttural, rough, mixed speech acquired from their democratic and cosmopolitan association with representatives of foreign nations; and as their eyes caught sight of Helen they seemed invariably to become oblivious of all else, and would stand transfixed in amusing attitudes gazing after her.

Now Helen realized for the first time why the man at the knitting works had looked so intently at her, for this morning everyone she passed seemed to have just such a gaze after her. Men came hurrying out of their homes with dinner pails on their arms, and pipes in their mouths and at sight of her would whirl about

and walk backwards, staring after her, clattering their pails, and even forgetting for the moment the usefulness and comfort of the pipes. Women engaged in their morning duties came to the doors and stood for a spell watching her. One, an Irish woman with a faded green skirt and a red waist surmounted by a bandanna handkerchief, was evidently very angry, and could be easily heard venting her ill humor on some one inside her domicile. Chancing to step outside for something she did not deem it necessary to interrupt her remarks, but only raised her voice the louder that they should not be lost upon their object, when she became conscious of Helen's eyes turned upon her and stopped with such ludicrous shortness that the last word was no word at all.

Then, in a moment, the head of the funniest little old Irishman was outlined in the window, looking slyly around the casement for the cause of this sudden and unnatural and possibly ominous silence, blinking his eyes and dodging his head back at sight of his mate outside, so like a monkey that Helen had to turn her face away and laugh.

A good many girls were coming from the side streets to the works, and they would stare at her and make remarks openly to each other or to themselves and with proper appreciation of the use and abuse of slang. The street was not used to having a girl such as she walk unattended and quietly, with a matter-of-course air, down its length. They expected her, if she came at all, to drive hurriedly through in a carriage, or at least to have an escort, and to look about

with disgust, and to lift her skirts and speak of how terrible it was to see such houses and such streets.

They did not speak to Helen. There was a great gulf between them, they were afraid of her; she must show them she was of the same composition, and worthy—in their way of looking at it—of their talk. She noticed this and was also conscious of the rude, and unflattering remarks of those about her and naturally felt sore at heart, but outwardly she showed no sign. Graceful, self-possessed, she was queen among these girls and she knew it; and yet she did not let this knowledge, which was the most hateful thing to the girls about her, show itself upon her face, but moved about amongst them, meeting their eyes, smiling as they laughed at some rough joke, and trying with what tact and unobtrusiveness she could, to be friendly with them.

She was wondering to herself how long she would be with them and saying to herself it would be only a little while, but at the same time with the skill of an actor and with the appreciation and knowledge of human character that she had, she was trying to disarm their suspicions and overthrow their natural enmity.

When they went in to work, she watched them with amusement as they put on extra flourishes for her benefit, and then in their conscious anxiety doing less well than in their usual mechanical unthinking performance of duty, they gradually subsided into their usual manner and ignored her. An overseer came to show her her duty which she found required quite a little dex-

terity coupled with a great deal of patience and pains-taking, so that her mind was fully occupied with her work, and she had almost forgotten them, when her friend came and spoke to her.

This friend to be, was no other than Sadie Maguire, or "Sade," as the girls called her, from the fact that she had such a good-natured grin, "such a redchy smile," they explained afterwards to Helen; a magnificent specimen of a young woman, Irish by descent, tall, strongly built, with regular features, a good, freckled complexion and dark, red-tinted hair, careless in the manner of dress, but good-hearted, quick-tempered, witty, demonstrative toward friends and fierce toward enemies.

Helen had noticed her in the morning at a little distance down the line, and had caught her several times regarding her—taking her in, as the saying was—but had forgotten her until at a particularly trying time in her work she felt a touch upon her arm and looking up saw it was Sadie.

"Go watch my machine," she said; "go ahead, the boss won't see you, he don't care anyhow," and Helen, a little confused by her sudden appearance, slipped off her stool and ran to watch the other's clicking machine without a word. Then presently Sade beckoned her back and gave her some needful directions a little roughly, for she was not to show herself soft on any account before the others, and listening to her thanks with a gesture of contempt went back to her work as though nothing had happened.

Helen had caught her fancy and she had ventured

this far in proof of it; but the next move was to come from Helen, and should Helen hold herself aloof or fail to meet her notions of etiquette, she would go no farther—she had her pride, and she had her ideas about making friends.

And this condition Helen met with a success that was not due to studied forms, or could not have been so well by long thought and deep planning, as by the simple wish in her friendless state to gain a friend, and by the natural sympathy and admiration for one whom she recognized as her equal in a different class of society.

When the hum of the machinery had stopped at noon the girls ran for their lunch baskets and carried them to the windows where they proceeded to eat the contents, and at the same time find amusement in watching passers-by and exchanging words with a group of young men who had come out of the building below them, or with the girls in the windows of rival sections.

Sade had seated herself upon the end of a table near one of the windows, with her basket in front of her, and Helen immediately made her way to her and, sitting down beside her, spread out her lunch, which consisted mostly of some fruit and cookies she had bought.

Then she began to speak of the machinery, and of the boss and presently reached over and took a piece of bread from "Sade's" basket, while she was glancing out of the window, pressing a pear stealthily in its place, and jerking her hand away when she saw she

was detected, which caused them both to laugh; and before they went back to work they were friends.

The hours of the afternoon dragged through slowly for her. Her limbs were stiff and weary from the continual and unaccustomed walking of the day before, and her back and arms were tired and muscles twitching from the work she was doing. When at last the hum of work ceased and she was drawn out amongst the tide of departing humanity, feeling the rude jamming and pushing, hearing the coarse laughter and ribald jests, seeing the unconcern, the want of shame, the ignorance, the carelessness, of those about her, the brave heart in her almost gave way and she was tempted to cry.

Where should she go? The hands were going by in groups of two's and three's to their homes—she had no home, the utter loneliness of her position was pressing itself upon her with crushing force. Where could she go? She had only a silver dollar in her possession and, poor as was the room she had had the night before she could not stay there—indeed, she did not see how she could live a week anywhere on that amount—and she would not get her pay for a week. Harry Spencer came to her thoughts. She must go to him after all; he would not take advantage of her position. But must she give up her place after so long a search? What would the man think of her? Maybe he would advance her some money rather than have her quit. She would go and see; she must save part of her dollar at all hazards so that if the worst came to the worst she could get away from this place,

But Helen had a friend. Sade, stalking home at the head of her little group, had been glancing back unusually often, so that her companions had been asking her where "Red" was, anyhow; they couldn't see him.

Their efforts to tease her, however, were only met by an exclamation more forcible than polite and she presently stopped altogether. Her eyes were not attracted this time by any masculine spark, but by the slight, lithesome, well-dressed figure, in the distance, appealing to her because of its very difference from its surroundings and awakening interest, if not sympathy, because of its slightness and seeming helplessness.

After a moment's stare she lined up the waiting group, just as though they were a squad of soldiers, and she captain, and gave them the following orders in quick succession: "Attention," "Present Arms," "Straighten up y'r backs," "Step out lively, now'n don't let y'r feet get behind you," "March," and, as they started on with exaggerated steps, and unduly straightened backs, she watched them with that broad smile on her face, that seemed to come so naturally, and to lighten and brighten it so much, and then, she turned back.

"Where you goin'?" she asked, unceremoniously, of Helen.

"I was—I thought I would go back and see Mr. Jones," Helen answered.

"Well, Mr. Jones went away—I saw him go."

"Oh, I'm sorry; I wish I'd have thought sooner to

“speak to him,—I guess, then, I’ll have to quit. Maybe I won’t see you again.”

“Quit?—what are you givin’ me? Can’t you stand the work?”

“Yes, but, I haven’t any money, at least only a dollar, and I can’t live on that, so I guess I’ll have to go back to my folks—to where I used to live?”

Sade was busy digging a hole in the ground with the toe of her shoe. “You wanted to get some money out o’ Jones then,” she asked.

“Yes, I thought maybe he would pay me in advance, or, if I—”

“I doubt it. Yonder goes Houg, t’other boss, but ’twouldn’t do any good to ask him; he’s meaner’n dirt.”

“Well,” said Helen, with a sigh, “I will go to the room I had last night, I guess, and, in the morning, I will see Mr. Jones and tell him I can’t work, and then I will go away. Will I see you in the morning? I guess I will, I will come around and tell you good-bye, anyhow.”

“Where did you stay last night?”

Helen pointed out the place.

“That’s the Mud House. We call it the Mud House. Well we have a room about as nice as they have, there. I’ll make room. Won’t you come and stay with me?”

This last, she spoke impulsively, and then she began to make excuses for her home; that it was, probably, not fit for Helen, but, at the same time, planning how she might have a room, and overruling Helen’s excuses, that she did not want to impose upon

them, with energetic denials of any imposition, while stating, in her rough way, and, perhaps, not so much by her words, either, as by her manner and tone, that she was set upon Helen coming and would be hurt by her refusal. And, so, she carried Helen off with her, and verily tore up and re-arranged the whole house, that she and Helen might have the best room to themselves.

Mr. Maguire was a quiet, dark-complexioned, little man who worked every day and got drunk every Sunday; Sade's mother was more like her, heavy-set, with a good complexion and a temper of her own, when aroused; Den, Sade's oldest brother, about twenty-five years of age, was a long, ungainly, dissipated, wretched-looking young man, who amounted to absolutely nothing, did no work, and smoked cigarettes, while Alf, the younger brother, was a cute little fellow of ten or twelve years.

Sade was, evidently, the head of the house and whatever she said was done. She was choosing, now, to make Helen at home and comfortable and, although the other folks were, evidently, surprised at Helen's coming amongst them, they were careful, under Sade's jealous eyes, to do nothing that could offend or embarrass her guest.

And, now, in this black little house, Helen was to spend almost a year of her life. She was not over pleased, the first week or two, in spite of Sade's friendliness, and tried to put forth some excuses for leaving, and could she have foreseen the length of her stay, she would, probably, have been discouraged, and

would have felt much as one sentenced to leave the bright, sunshiny world, for the dark gloom of a prison cell.

But, luckily, our future does not overhang with impending disaster. We climb up the path of life with the fog all about us; sometimes it seems to lift and we go down into green valleys of pleasure and enjoyment. Then, it hangs over the rocky path to shorten by its shrouding presence the time of trial and of steepness, and, lo, we look back from the summit, when we have passed over, and say, "it was not so bad after all."

Sade's friends came to be Helen's friends. They were mostly Irish girls and, standing at a distance, one would have said they were a hard crowd. The sort of girls who say things very witty, sometimes, and often things very shocking to fully civilized ears; girls who laugh boisterously; who know, well, the language of vice; who are hardened by daily contact with the degradation and misery of sin; to whom drunkenness is commonplace, and quarrels and fightings are amusements.

Some would have lived in a state of perpetual antagonism with them, and life would thus have been a drag and a conflict, from which anyone would have been glad to flee; but Helen succeeded, somehow, in finding the way to their hearts and sympathies. They took her into the set and watched and protected her, jealously, from any who would slight her; they talked of her, planned for her and came, almost, to worship her.

Sade's leadership had given way, but she had seemed to take this only as a matter of course, and had shown a freedom from jealousy and hard feeling in the matter, that would have been commendable in higher and politer society, and an inordinate pride, and passionate affection for one who in some circumstances would have been a fiercely hated, and freely maligned rival.

Helen's work had become easier with practice, and the girls were all so willing and anxious to help her that she could not complain on that score. Her room at the Maguire's, despite the outward appearance of the place, was pleasant enough, too, and although she would often rather have been alone, the devotion and anxiety to please, together with the wit, and natural grace, and strength of character, of her companion, appealed to her, and proved the solace and comfort of her present life.

To the youths of the neighborhood she had been utterly indifferent. They were not her sort and she kept them at a distance with a skill that was a delight to all the girls, and, perhaps, her popularity with them was due, in some measure, to this, for, although they exchanged words roughly with their beaux, and seemed, often, to rebuff and ridicule them, carelessly enjoying their discomfiture, any act of appropriation of, or undue interest in, them, by another girl, would have caused them to "slop over" as the rough saying of the district was, so that enmity would have supplanted friendship in a surprising manner.

Den Maguire had been most annoying to Helen,

for, seeing that she was a girl to be admired, he had set himself the task of winning her to himself, with a strength of resolution new to him. He came to stay more about the house, especially in the evenings, and was more careful about his attire, brushing up his clothes, and combing his hair, and throwing his cigarette stubs out doors instead of leaving them about the house, and, in other ways, improving his person and manners for her benefit. But, although she appreciated this reformation, his forcing himself upon her presence, his labored efforts to talk with her, and his ugly smile, she could not stand and, after some hesitation, she one day confided to Sade that his efforts in that line were not altogether pleasant to her. This proved to be all that was necessary, for, after forcibly stating the case to Den, whom she heartily despised, Sade, without any ado, proceeded to emphasize it by arguments stronger than words. He made a show of resistance but, like a dog attacked by a cat, shut his eyes, ducked his head before her fierce claws, and, so handicapped, and finding no place to use his strength, he could only turn about and retire, vanquished.

Helen had watched the fracas from the half-open door of her room, and had noted the routing of her suitor with great satisfaction, and when Sade came in, panting, and working her strong, plump arms, with imitations of a fighter, she threw herself upon the bed convulsed with laughter.

“He won’t honey around you again,” Sade had said, and this proved to be the truth, for he rarely ever

spoke to Helen after that and became his old self again, as naturally as though no higher thoughts had stirred his breast, and, often, when he would sit in his favorite corner, looking sullenly down at the floor, Helen could not help but laugh at the recollection of the battle which had quenched his ardor.

CHAPTER XXV

But, in spite of the kindness and friendliness of Sade and her crowd, Helen was in a strange place and one never to be quite congenial or satisfactory to her nature. She was isolated little less,—young woman, pet of society, adorned with silks and jewels, admired and flattered as you are—than you—if set down in a village of the Zulus of Africa—would be, amongst the dusky maidens of that country or, if, indeed, to be more accurate, you had stepped into her place in the factory, mingled with the noisy, unrefined, ungirlish girls, or slept in that little room with Sade.

For remember, she had been reared in the midst of plenty—she had been beautiful and admired; she had been raised as the white rose in the hot house, or the delicate carnation; her slender, willowy body, had been unused to exertion, much less, confinement and labor. She had been used to the finer sensibilities; to the silvery laugh, and to well modulated and differentially spoken words; she had had music, and art, and all the intricacies of dress, and fashion, and amusement, to occupy and please her.

What a change! True, she had had an intermediate step; fate had seemed to push her, down into the depths, with two great shoves; the first was not so bad,

but the second had been cruel. She had shown a wonderful adaptability to her surroundings but, more than her companions could have realized, did their rough jests and unrefined acts jar and grate upon her inner self; more than she realized did each day wear upon the precious remnant of her finer self; with greater force, as time passed, was the moral ignorance and material ugliness about her deadening her soul; and more and more did the meagreness and poverty, the lack of culture and intellectual food, the absence of one who could inspire, and brighten, and help her, in her life, and the corresponding strain and weight of those who, unmeaningly, and because of the very inferiority of their make up, were dragging her down as they looked up to her, increased the yearning which makes one's soul uneasy and rebellious. And so, had it not been for another tie, stronger than any of these perhaps, her stay in this community would have been a short one.

On the second Sunday of her stay at the Maguire's she had escaped from all the girls, and was walking slowly down the street toward the city, thinking as she had often thought of the time when she might go back to see Harry, and her other friends, in the store and in the church.

She was recalling, one by one, the old familiar faces. How good it would seem to walk down the aisle of that little church, and how restful it would seem to listen to a good sermon, and to see people who appreciate good language and good singing; how she yearned to hear some music; how she even yearned to see some

green grass and a pretty house. She turned, for a minute, and looked back at the mill, silent and deserted, with the sun glinting upon the small, cob-web-covered windows; at the old tenement and the black, unsightly, little houses--Ugh!-- Down this street led to freedom; just in front of her lay the great city. Why should she not walk on, and on, and never come back?

For the first time, a feeling of scorn of the place had come over her, and hatred, as one feels who, having been working in some dark, dismal hole, has stepped out into the bright sunshine and fresh air, and realizing the contrast must smother his repugnance and go back.

And, yet, there was a feeling of hesitation about leaving. Where could she go? Not to her old home; nowhere but to see Harry, and, there was the old question, again, "Could he get her employment?" Would there be any satisfaction in meeting him, again, only to acknowledge her dependence upon him, and to ask him for help.

She had such a little money saved; her place, so hardly earned, was not to be carelessly thrown away; neither was the rough, demonstrative affection, of these girls, who had, so quickly, come to look upon her as an uncrowned queen amongst them—but, could she stand it to go back to them?

At any rate she must enjoy her breath of freedom now, she thought, and so she quickened her pace and walked block after block, until she had come out into the better streets; until she heard, again, the familiar clang and rattle of the street cars; the clatter of horses,

feet upon the pavement and the shrill cry of a news-boy in the distance. She even passed a church and a theater, and, although she looked upon both with, we might say, impartial and equal longing, they were closed and she could not go in.

But at last she stopped; she was as far away as she dared to go, and, standing on the street corner, she looked about her with conflicting emotions. Across the street was a beautiful house with green grass, in abundance, and flower beds, and winding walks, and pretty trees. And on the porch sat a young woman, dressed in pink muslin, and a little boy, while a big Newfoundland dog, trying his best to amuse them, wagged his tail vigorously, when they laughed at him. Home—As she looked at them a sense of her loneliness and unhappiness brought the tears to her eyes, and she turned away. A street-car man was clanging his bell, at the corner, and looking intently at her. Did she want a car? She slowly shook her head; she did, but she couldn't afford to ride.

The sounds of the street were causing her heart to beat faster and her cheeks to tingle—but, she must go back for another week anyhow, and so; after a last look, she set out. She would write to Harry, anyhow, and find out what to do. She should have written him before, but somehow the days had each been so full and had slipped away one by one, with so little jar in their passing; and she had been so tired, she had not done it. She had inquired, one day, of Sade, for writing materials, but diligent search through the Maguire's home, had failed to bring forth more than

some leaves from an old copy book and a lead pencil. Helen would not have scorned these but an envelope and stamp were not to be secured except by a five block's walk and so, for that time, she had given up the letter-writing.

So now, as she was passing a place where they had stationery for sale, she went in and bought some, and, for some distance, as she went on, afterward, she planned what she should say in her letter, but it was destined that this letter should be interrupted again, and also that a new factor, if we could not say an old friend, was to come into her life.

The walk back had seemed longer than the going; she did not realize having passed so many places and was beginning to wonder if she could have missed her way when she saw, just ahead of her, the Mud House, as Sade called it, where she had spent her first night in that district. Luckily it would not be far, now, for it was already dusk and it was hardly safe for her to be alone after dark on these streets.

But, as she came to the corner, some one, coming from the rear of the building, almost collided with her. It was her father. With a sinking heart, she saw him. Again, like an icy touch upon her, came the sudden conviction that he, with his curse, had entered into her life again.

Surprise had overmastered all other emotions on the part of the father. "Why, Helen," he cried, and then, remembering how they had parted, he was about to flee, but she put out her hand and held him. "I want you," she said, and, then, she led him a distance away

from a rough group, on the Mud House porch, who, mistaking her motive, were talking and laughing about them unpleasantly.

"Where have you been?" she asked. But for a time, this old man, gaunter and whiter than ever; trembling with an added nervousness; with a quickened hearing and a habit of slyly scrutinizing one's face but avoiding the eyes—could not seem to speak, but stood, with his long, slender hands folded in front of him, and eyes fixed steadily upon the ground, as though, ashamed and convicted, he was waiting for her blame.

And well did he know, too, that her words of condemnation could not be fitting for the ghastly horror of his crime; a blasted life and a hangman's rope was its sterner due. But, worse than this knowledge would have been words of accusation from Helen's lips; he would have cowered and shrunk from them, as from a red-hot iron, but she did not speak them; her voice, as she questioned him, did not have the disdainful or scornful inflection that he had expected and dreaded. Perhaps this gave him some hope and he was wondering if she knew the fearful truth. Possibly he was wondering why he had staid and, if it would not be better, yet, to escape. Or, maybe, he was too overcome with emotion to think that this girl should speak to him at all. Anyhow, it was not until Helen had spoken to him several times, that she elicited any response from him.

"Where are you staying?" she had asked and he had pointed his thumb toward the Mud House and explained sententiously, "In the kitchen."

"How long have you been there?"

"A week."

"Where were you before that?"

This would need a more extended answer, and the drunkard hesitated and looked nervously, in every direction before he spoke. Helen was questioning him very calmly; that icy feeling had served to banish any disturbing emotions, either of pity or horror. Possibly he wondered if Harry was near or if she would betray him.

"I was away," he stammered. "I—I went south, a ways, but thought I would come back," and, then, the fear within him brought out a question, hurriedly. "Is it dangerous for me, here? Will I get caught?"

He was sorry, immediately, for the unguarded words, and tried to stammer some explanation, but Helen knew of it; she did not ask what danger, or why. She was looking steadily at him and he, feeling her eyes upon him, lifted his for a minute. She was thinking of Harry and of him. She must choose between them. She must give up thoughts of returning to her old friends, or she must renounce her father, and she felt that a harsh word, spoken by her, would be now a separation for probably all time.

In the brief minute that she stood looking at him past events crowded through her mind like a panorama. Especially did their former meeting stand out distinctly in this bird's eye view of her life, and now, as then, did she lift up an appeal to her Creator for help. God came closer to her than for weeks before and, as she turned her soul upward for the minute,

religious impulses came sweeping into her being with all the transforming influence and power of the Almighty's messages to this earth.

Suddenly she took her father's chin upon her two hands and lifted his face up to hers and then, impulsively pressed a kiss upon it, "Father, you need never be afraid, I will never harm you. He never will. He is far away and I—I will never let him know where we are."

As they looked into each other's eyes, they read each others thoughts; there was no secret between them; there was, by that quick, searching glance, an understanding conveyed that made words unnecessary, and that brought a sympathy that these same words, whether direct—harsh and grating—or round about—hinting and parleying—would have inevitably destroyed.

"I will quit drinkin' for you, girl," he answered in a husky, choked voice, and all the remnant of his manhood was behind the words. But every day are men swearing thus to quit the bitter drink, before wife and hungry children, before mothers, pleading in their pathetic helplessness, "Before God, and these witnesses, I solemnly swear to abstain, etc." To these do they sign their names. Before the chancel rail of the church, with ministers' hands in theirs and sympathetic neighbors standing behind, do these miserable wretches cry out for deliverance. Before the rude bench of the Salvation Army, with encouraging cries in their ears, do they sob and tremble before God—and yet do they fail, and human fiends entice them back to their death.

These two walked together, to the Maguire home and Helen told of their relationship much to the surprise of that worthy family.

"Is that guy your father?" Sade asked, after he had left. "Really now, I'll be stepped on if I c'n believe it."

Helen answered in the affirmative.

"Boozes, don't he?" commented Sade.

"He drinks; he used to, but he promised me he would quit."

"He wont, though. He'll be like my dad, I told him he had to quit, I scared him for all I knew and I made Ma get after him too, but it only lasted a little bit and he begun to growl around that he'd leave the house if we didn't leave him alone, and so we did—You might just as well let 'em drink. I used to drink, a little, myself on occasions, but still, it spoils people—I hate to see 'em boozy."

"It's wrong. It's my duty to help my father; he was a fine man, once; that is, he was smart, had a fine home and good clothes. Drinking has spoiled him, but, worst of all, it deadens the morals and spiritual—it cuts him out of heaven. By God's help I'm going to try to help him to stop."

Her voice was low and tremulous with emotion as she spoke these words. It was the first time Sade had ever heard her speak of God and she was evidently much awed so that she did not answer in words, but came and put her arms about Helen's neck and helped to wipe away the tears which had come into her eyes.

Then Helen released herself and going into their

little room threw herself upon the bed and tried to think. The decision had been a hard one for her. The very strength of determination and energy she had summoned to the struggle had brought that sudden impulse to seal her decision with a kiss, and by that she had banished all other considerations.

But she was only human and some of these considerations were making her uncomfortable now. The longing to go back into the world again, as it were, must be quenched. That breath of freedom she had enjoyed that afternoon was only a phantom breath and mockery. The factory life was to be her lot for she could not tell how long. She had promised not to let Harry know of her whereabouts. The letter she had been planning must be given up—how she wished she had written before, and yet it was better that she had not. He would be hunting her, if he cared for her. He would be worried and she should at least let him know that she was alive. And here for some time her thought was interrupted by wondering—wondering if he did care for her, or how much, and if he was wondering if she cared for him. Possibly there was no wondering about it on his part, and the tinge of color and faint smile that came into her face indicated a pleasing knowledge, but gave way to a look of pain, and with a sigh she arose and arranging her writing material began to write.

Her first attempt was unsuccessful and she tore it up, likewise the second; but after studying over the third a while she folded it and put it into her pocket. It ran:

“Dear Friend:—I write you this to let you know that I am well, that I have employment and friends. Knowing that you would be puzzled and probably alarmed at my disappearance, I should have written sooner. Circumstances have placed a barrier between us and it is my earnest wish that you should not try to find me, as so doing will bring unhappiness to myself and one whom I love. “Helen Parker.”

It was a roughly written little note, and she had wished to add a word of regret; some little feminine sentence of tenderness and sympathy, to round it out; to tell him of her trials and struggles; and friends and surroundings; to speak of her old friends, old ties; of her hopes, her wishes, her aspirations. She had almost said, I will come to you, some time, if possible, but had given it up. It was harsh. In her effort to make it straightforward, and business-like, she had made it jagged and rough, and she felt that it would cut into the very heart of her best earthly friend.

But she was not writing it for herself but for her father, and so, after crying over it, that night, when Sade was asleep, and nobody knew of it, she took it over to the Mud House, on the following evening, and showed it to him. At first he was greatly startled and shrunk back from the very touch of it, but, presently, she induced him to read it and he agreed that there was nothing in it which could lead to his undoing.

“Do as you wish,” she had said. “Send it or no.”

And she relinquished it into his hands and turned away with a sigh of weariness.

Then he began to plead with her to leave him, and go back to her lover, for he felt the sacrifice and the pathos of that message and despised himself all the more for being the cause of it, but she would not hear him, and he began to plan how he might send it, safely, so as to avoid a tell-tale postmark upon it.

CHAPTER XXVI

As often as possible Helen went to the Mud House to see her father but, in the shortening days of the approaching winter, it was barely daylight when she went to her work and dark when she had finished, and in her wearied condition, she could not go to him every night, besides which, it would not have been safe for her to go alone. He could get away, sometimes, to talk with her, a few minutes, at the noon recess, and sometimes he came to Maguire's, evenings; but, while Sade evidently tried to restrain her feelings, her natural aversion for the father and her jealousy of his attention to Helen were so marked as to make them uncomfortable, and she saw that he was in danger of discontinuing these visits.

So she felt that her influence over him was not strong enough; he was too far away, and her uneasiness in this respect was presently changed to certainty. She had gone over to the Mud House one night, after a several days' absence, and at once saw that her father had been drinking; the old fever of intemperance was upon him and he had given up.

She did not speak of it, but he saw, from her manner, that she knew it, and at once fell to cursing himself, and pleading with her to leave him in his shame.

Upon the next day she told Sade that she was going to leave her and go to the Mud House.

"Not if I know anthing about it, you won't," Sade had cried out, passionately. "You won't give me the shake, that way, will you, Helen? Why should you? You can't go; I won't let you," and she had put her great arms about her, as she was in the habit of doing, to hold her.

"I must be with my father," Helen replied, firmly, and pushing the arms away, "I am not with him enough."

"Why, you see him every day that passes."

"No, a good many days I don't see him at all, and then, I haven't enough influence over him; I can't help him enough.

"Can't he take care of himself, he's big enough, he's got work, and enough grub," Sade answered, for their family relations had made such reasoning almost unintelligible to her.

"Yes, but—he was drinking last night——"

"Oh, booze is got him, again. You think, if you wuz at the Mud House, you would keep it away from him. Well, you wouldn't, I told you at first how it 'ud be."

"Well, I must try," Helen answered, desperately. "I hate to leave you; you've been very kind to me, but, after all, I won't be very far away and I'll see you every day."

"No, but that don't go, I don't want you to go to the Mud House. There's a hard gang over there, they'll get away with your old man in spite of you. I say, bring him over here, I'll make room same as I did for you, I'll help you to take care of him."

This, at first, Helen flatly refused to do, but at last Sade, whose will power seemed always capable of overruling Helen's, gained her consent, providing her father did not object, and then, going over to see him that night, the craftiness and earnestness of Sade's tongue, which would have honored a diplomat, together with the discouraging outlook of his present state, elicited from him the promise to come.

He was to have a part of the other bed room curtained off for him, Sade said, and despite the lateness of the hour when they returned, she went at once to work arranging. Alf, with much cuddling, and patting, and tickling, was tucked away in an improvised bed, at the foot of his parents', while Den was unceremoniously informed that his place of rest was to be upon some bedding on the floor of the dining room.

He objected, strenuously, for a time, but, seeing the fire of indignation coming into the eyes of his big sister, he sullenly gave in, and so Sade's declaration that she would make room for Helen's father, had not been in vain.

Here, for almost two months, they lived, through the coldness of the winter, the three laborers setting out together for their work, in the early mornings, and returning together at night. For some time the father had seemed to improve, under their watchful care, until Sade said, approvingly, one day, "He'll get his back straight, yet," though, in her well-meant efforts to help, she was, at times, a little too rough, jarring upon the patience of the lawyer who, in his

younger days, had been a man of the finer sensibilities, and which all the dissipation of his life had failed to obliterate, so that he prized the sympathy and devotion of his daughter, with a tenderness and appreciation, one would not expect from his appearance.

To him it was torture to see Helen in these rough surroundings; to see her slender form trudging off, beside him, through the cold, to the dismal mill; to see her, as a pansy surrounded by asters, in the midst of the girls, answering their rough jests, laughing with them, talking of their work and of their homes; becoming a part of the neighborhood. It was a pathetic sight and one that brought fresh pangs of remorse from the overburdened conscience, and a feeling of desperation and hopelessness to his soul.

Perhaps it was this that helped in his downfall and their final separation. He failed, one night, to meet the girls at the mill, as he usually did and, after going home without him, and waiting for some time, they set out toward the Mud House after him. They met him on the way, and the strong whiff of drink upon his breath, easily explained the cause of his delay. Sade unwisely ventured a word of remonstrance, which he resented, and Helen, speaking to quiet him, came in for a sharp word from him.

This was the last straw and he knew it. For a time after that, he stayed, but he avoided the girls' company, to a great extent, passing Sade sullenly, and ashamed and downcast, cringing, as it were, before Helen.

One night the two girls had been out for a short

walk and were nearing the house, arm in arm, when an approaching figure, easily recognizable to them, halted, hesitatingly, in the distance and then began to make a detour to enter the house without meeting them.

"It's him," Sade commented. "He ain't p'tickler about seein' us."

"Father," Helen called.

At that he stopped and presently, came to them and they saw that he had been drinking, though he was striving to conceal it.

"What did you want?" he asked.

For a moment she did not answer, and then, it was in a tone meant to shame him, perhaps, though she had given up hope of his reformation.

"I wish you'd bring me some beer, too."

"You," he cried, aghast. "To you?"

She laughed in a way that she would not have been capable of six months before, for this striving against such odds was bringing a bitterness into her nature.

"Yes. Why not?"

"Hell, child, I'm dragging you down," he cried fiercely, stamping his foot upon the ground. "Go back to your old place; go back, I say. You must leave this cursed place, and forget me for a drunken wretch. I will never curse you again, Helen, by a look."

Surprised and terrified by his vehemence, the girls were conscious of these words and also that he was disappearing in the distance, more as though it was a dream than a reality, but Helen suddenly broke away

from Sade's detaining hand and started in pursuit. With a wild shriek the figure in front of them, quickened its pace and they could see it flying wildly ahead, into the darkness and presently disappear, and then Helen stopped and allowed herself to be captured by her pursuing friend.

"Gee, how you can run," were Sade's first words, after she had recovered a little breath, and the ludicrousness of the situation, flashing upon her, Helen had to laugh and that laugh helped to dispel the grief and the horror of that tragic parting, but still, there was much sadness in it for her, and tears soon followed the laugh.

Sade had tried her best to comfort, though to her the disappearance of this man was evidently a relief. Den, who had been in a state of almost open rebellion was now enabled to return to his old quarters and the Maguire home settled down to its old domestic felicity.

The days of the spring came and went, and those of the summer, and still, Helen worked at the mill and lived with Sade. With her, the untroubled, unanxious philosophy of the girls about her, who looked upon mill work as their natural occupation, and whose younger sisters spoke longingly of the time when they might enter the mill, too, was impossible. She could not speak with scorn and contempt of the rich and educated, and the higher classes of people, as so many of these did, in their ignorance, for she had been of that class. She was as an exile longing for her native country, while they were speaking, as

foreigners do, of a country and a people they knew not.

At times, she would feel an almost uncontrollable impulse to fly somewhere. Restless as a tigress confined in a cage, she would chafe at the slow passing hours of the day, and at night would defy Sade's best efforts to please her; answering her petulantly; refusing to laugh; finding fault with her plans, until the latter, seemingly never impatient with her, would turn her back upon her in mock disgust.

These attacks, however, did not last very long and became less frequent as time passed. Environment is a great shaper of our lives. With surprising power does it mould our bodies, our wills, our thoughts, to it. With undeniable skill does it seem to throw a charm upon us, to make the past seem distant and unreal, and to minify the future to the present and hold us, unwittingly, in our place, so that we look back and say, "I have lived here so long, I have done this work so long,—how strange."

And so, much of the time, Helen could be really happy and content, not worrying, either because of the past or the future, being occupied with the present and the details of life which enter into anyone's existence everywhere.

At first she had expected that, possibly, her father might return, but days lengthened into weeks without him and so she had given him up.

Religiously, Helen was suffering the worst; her body was, perhaps, less supple and graceful, and her shoulders a little inclined to droop because of the

work. Mentally, she was not gaining, and lack of gain means lack of power, there. In manners and, too, in society graces she was not gaining, but, naturally neat, graceful, and self-possessed, she was the model and example of the girls about her in these respects and was rather raising the standard of the neighborhood than suffering because of its depressed state. Sometimes, for fun, she repeated some of the sayings and by-words of the girls, but her tongue still retained its untarnished purity of tone and speech. She was in contact with degradation and outbroken sin, but her nature was above enjoying their dissipations.

Two different Sundays she had gone to a mission, at no very great distance, but had received little consolation from its services. The congregations were of the same rough, ignorant class, as her neighbors. The matron's attention was very much taken up with a set of noisy young boys whom she was trying to interest, and although she came and spoke to Helen, she was evidently not used to talking to persons of her breeding, and could not, or did not conceive that Helen was in need of any help and hungry for religious consolation and advice.

There was no church near, and she had come in contact with no one who professed Christianity. Her inquiries amongst the girls, had brought out some original ideas, and some jumbled-up Catholic doctrines, of which she was ignorant. There seemed to be no one who could help her.

As one who is shut in the dark finds it more and more

difficult to conceive of the light, she, excluded from Christian kindness and sympathy, was beginning to doubt their reality; separated from church and friends they had come to seem distant and apathetic, but worse than the doubting, and the estrangement from old friends, was the doubting and the carelessness of God's goodness, and wisdom, and care.

Ah, it was a testing time for her. But, you say, it was not so much testing as the submerging of faith and hope. As it was, it seemed that way to her and she wondered why it was permitted; why, when she was trying to cling to the faith, she should be almost torn from it; why, when she had prayed for help and deliverance, from her distasteful surroundings and uneasiness of soul, there had seemed to come no answer.

But, was it God's fault? Was He distant and weak and uncaring? No, in his name girls more fragile and as beautiful, had gone out alone into the blackness, sin and misery of heathenism and had wrought mightily; suffering from fevers and agues and homesickness; dying unswerving, unfaltering, with smiles upon their lips. Consecrated women were working, down amongst the dark slums, fighting ignorance, sickness and poverty and showing sympathy and interest for just such as and worse than Helen was now among, penetrating the dank air of darkness, with the calm light of Christ's Spirit shining in their faces, and their cheer and smile not freezing or darkening from the contact—yes, in his strength. But Helen was not using his strength.

She was concealing her intercourse with him; she was living a life of neutrality or, at least, of inactivity, where once she had upheld her religion in the face of opposition and persecution. Once she had been kept brave, and strong by the means of grace, by often looking up to God; by the sympathy of her church friends, especially by Harry Spencer's example and advice, and by her generous impulses and Christian solicitude toward her father.

True, she was encouraging the girls about her to do right. She was giving them good moral advice whenever she felt that her influence would warrant it. She was using all of the money she could spare of her slender wages to relieve the suffering about her, which was often lamentable, appealing to her strongly, sometimes buying a warm garment or badly needed household article for one of the girls, and by so doing winning their warm gratitude and admiration; for they, while in the main generous, were unthinking and, deprivation being their lot, did not notice each other's lack, though they appreciated one who did.

She was holding religion as by a thread, sometimes looking up at it as one does at a kite, wondering if it would get away from her, and sometimes hungering for it, but with a poor hope even as she prayed that he would answer.

Ah, young believer, do not as she did. Look not for the weakness of God but for your own. Look not for his neglect but at yourself. Think not of his distance but of your rebellion. Give not up the struggle. If doubts seem to come upon you as the blinding fog,

watch eagerly for the sun to shine through. If your life seems to have been ruined and dwarfed, say not, there is no God, but search for the power that shall swell it out and expand it into eternity. If evil-stained faces seem everywhere to confront you, and mockery seems to hang over you as the pall of the evil one, be not yet dismayed, for all this is only threatening and no harm. If your life becomes unlovely and wretched in your sight, and a burden, oh, try to infuse from some source some unselfishness into it, something greater than unselfishness that shall cause you to forget your trials, some forethought and yet greater, that shall dwarf the darkness of your life in the blaze and joy of that to come.

CHAPTER XXVII

It was a quiet Sunday evening. It had been a very warm day, and the people of the little town of B—— in southern Iowa seemed to be all sitting outside upon their porches, reclining under the shade of their great trees, or lounging in their hammocks, trying to catch the evening breezes which were beginning to come fluttering through the air.

This was a town of quietness and of churches. There were three of them, white and tall with slender spires. But whether so many were needed because of the abundance of worshipers, or because of troublesome doctrines and diverging ideas, would be a question to a newcomer.

Scattered down Main street in an ill-regulated row were almost a dozen stores and shops, including two black, dirt-floored blacksmith shops—to cater to the necessities of the inhabitants and of the surrounding country. These former were not of that class that turn the world upside down by their energy and ambitions. Most of them gardened and raised a few chickens. Several of them were traders in grain. There were the half-dozen merchants, and the two brawny blacksmiths with their helpers. There were those who, having possessions of land near by, were content to live quietly in the town with their renting and collecting of rent as their only anxiety. There were huck-

sters, stockmen, teamsters and loafers, who seemed well content to make a daily round of their professional acquaintances, read their papers and whittle in their doorways.

But this was the Sabbath day, and all was quiet, except for the play of a curly black dog which ran scampering about barking and whining as two small children clapped their hands at it, and except for the laughter that now and then came from two country swains and their town girls, who had sought the shade of a great cottonwood in the far edge of the town.

And now comes the ringing of the church bells, echoing out over the surrounding country, now in unison, now alternating, supplementing each other, calling and welcoming all to the closing services of the Sabbath rest. Teams were already pouring in from the country, and there was many a rough greeting and inquiry as to the prospects and the looks of corn. There was the gathering together of certain soft young men and their always smiling, blushing girls before the meeting house; and at the rear, amongst the horses, was another, of those young men with their admiring hangers-on, who looked down upon such softness, and who were frequently yelling out some derogatory remark at them, but continually relapsing into their never-failing, never-exhausted, subjects, horse swapping, colt breaking, and pony racing, their conversation now and then enlivened by intervals of high and irreverent words and threatenings from one to break another's jaw, with the undivided and irrespective encouragement of all.

A few minutes of stolen and sweet delay, and then one by one the loungers, disappeared from their positions of comfort, going inside to get ready, and soon the quiet streets were dotted with the church-goers. The bell chimed out the last summons. The racks were full. The stragglers, with perspiring faces, had hurried inside, all but some of these same Godless young men who found it more to their liking to sit in old Barb Grey's spring wagon and swap news than to "set in the hot meetin' house and put up with preachin' fer an' hour and a half."

But there were two individuals just outside the town upon the hillside who seemed little affected by all this. They were disreputable looking specimens of humanity and would have been classified as tramps of the species bum.

One fat and unshapely lay sprawling upon his back, his head resting upon a slight grassy eminence that surrounded the trunk of the tree under which he lay, while his knees pointed toward the heavens. A greasy cap flattened under his head proved an all-sufficient pillow and his eyes were closed in lazy content and indifference.

His companion, stretched at full length a few feet distant, with his head resting upon his hand, was no more pleasing to the eye though a contrast, tall and angular with long, uncombed, grizzled hair, and black eyes, his face, white and sallow and evidently for a long time unshaven.

Both had cast-away, travel-worn garments, which hung about them in dispirited folds and creases, and

together they formed a picture of unsightly forlornity greatly marring the otherwise beautiful and peaceful little orchard.

As the bells had rung out, the closed eyes of the fat man had slowly opened, and he had made some lazy remark about 'em all goin' ter church; but the long man, if he heard, did not answer.

He had picked up a fallen apple from the grass beside him and was looking at it intently and impassionately. Maybe he was wondering when apples would be ripe for they were still very green and sour, or maybe he was wondering like the small boy how apples came to grow round. Presently, however, he spoke up.

"It's about six months since we left town, ain't it, Jack?"

"'Bout, I guess—'twere in de first mont'."

"Yes, and quite a little over—seems like a long spell—'twere cold then."

A grunt of assent was the only answer and the speaker did not seem satisfied. Getting up rather hastily he walked back and forth several times under the tree, and then halting, gave the feet of his sleeping mate an unceremonious kick.

"Huh," cried that individual, starting up suddenly, and then as he looked about him he subsided again. "Thought I was in a box-car an' a perlece wakin' of me with his club. What d'ye want; somebody comin'?"

"No, I want to talk to you."

"Well, I'll be ——" and he sat up in astonishment

as the strangeness of the request and of his companion's manner became apparent to him. "Why, don't yer set down? It makes me tired to see yer stand up that way."

"I've a notion to quit bumming," continued the tall man, complying with the request.

"An' what?" was the sententious query.

"An' go to work, square an' fer good."

A convulsive twitch came to the fat man's mouth as though a bitter pill had touched his lips, and he gave an incredulous jerk to his head; "Naw—yer jokin', Parker."

"No, I ain't, Jack—been thinking about it all afternoon."

"What! 'Ave you struck an easy job—pullin' century flowers for boquets or sich like? or 'ave you struck a purty girl?"

"No, I'd tell ye, Jack, if you wouldn't jush me," and he eyed the other soberly.

"Naw, go on."

"Well, it was just a little girl, purty as an angel, curls and blue eyes, and a voice as sweet an' soft—it made me think of my own little girl—you know I've told you about her, Jack—only she ain't little now."

"Yes, heard you speak about her now and agin."

"You see I were off t'uther side the town workin' my dinner, and was havin' a lot of trouble. Everybody wuz to church except them as was too cussed mean and grouchy to give a fellow a hand-out, but I wuz climbin' that raise over yonder slow-like when I heard some

one running and panting behind me, and when I turned round, here it wuz this little girl."

"She comes right up and asks, 'Oh, man, what time is it?' 'Course I didn't have my watch, but I had noticed at the last place it wuz a quarter to noon and I told her so.'

" 'Oh,' she said, 'I wuz afraid I'd be late to Sunday school; our teachers don't want us to be late. My, but I'm warm! Wouldn't you like to carry my coat for me?' An' if you'd believe it, pard, she give it right over to me, where some people on de short acquaintance wouldn't trusted me to carry a shoe string for 'em. But I walks right along an' carries it or her, same's if I liked to do it. Kind o' forgot myself and didn't stop at the next house, nor the next, but wuz just listening to her talk, till all of a sudden we wuz at the church——"

"An' went in an' got converted?" put in the other.

"No, but she stood right by me an' said I could hold her coat a little while longer. An' I stood a-listening to her questions, an' she wuz telling me about what a nice Sunday school they had, and that her father wuz the superintendent. She couldn't say de word, but she said he wuz de man who stood up in front—an' she had such a nice teacher, an' she asked me if I had any little girls an' if they went to Sunday school, too, and if I didn't buy them any dolls and nice clothes. She wanted me to go in with her, and then an old man, I guess he was near-sighted, spoke to me that it wuz a good thing to bring the children, just like as though I wuz her father. Then church let out, and the fine

people begun to come out and so I cleared out, too."

As he finished, Jack seemed incapable of any reply, even his sluggish nature had been touched by the quickly spoken sentences, and the unsteadiness of his companion's voice, so that a jesting or scorning remark did not seem right to him, and yet he hardly knew what words would express the rude notion of sympathy he felt.

So, after a moment's pause, the other continued:

"Yes, pard, it's strange, but somehow it stirred me up and made me feel like I wanted to quit trampin' and go to work—be differ'nt, so people 'ud speak to me and so I wouldn't feel like a sneakin' dog. Its strange why it should—as strange as why I ever come down to a tramp, an' that I never could understand. I had a good chance once. I might a been a smart lawyer."

"Then, why ain't you?"

"You know why. Drink and gamblin' brought me down; but why I ever let 'em is the mystery."

"Yes, an' I'm afraid they would again, but what did you think of doin', pard; turn to farmin'?"

"Couldn't Jack—don't know hay seed from pumpkins, an' besides if I knew it all, none of 'em would look at me."

"Ye couldn't go to lawyerin', Bill, you'd be bringin' in bum talk, an' they wouldn't stand it."

"Yes, an' I'd be dead before I got a client—but I've a notion to start for town; I never could stand it to travel long. I went south a while back an' even went

into some of de big towns and tried to stay, but I couldn't. I couldn't get to feel at home, out here in the country; it's too still, an' then yer meetin' better classes of people, an' you're alone, an' they're lookin' at you so blasted keen—it gets away with me. I want to get back amongst the old soaks where I ain't noticed an' they don't take so much int'rest in me."

"Well, we kin go back. I ain't never leary of de town myself."

"I'm up against it dere myself you——"

"What."

"Well, it's not so bad, it's old, but I wouldn't like to get cracked up and sometimes I get d—d nervous in there an' wish I wuz out."

"I never heard 'bout it. Don't be mum. Wuz it swipin'?"

For a moment the tall man hesitated, his eyes fell to the ground and his long bony fingers twisted about each other nervously, then he glanced at his partner and then averting his eyes answered in a strained, different tone.

"'Twere a fight, pard, an' de man died."

"You weren't tracked?"

"No."

"Whose onto you?"

"De boy and my girl."

"'Tweren't right to let her in."

"It wasn't my doin's—but she's mum—she's an angel, Jack; tried to help me out, left her friends for me an' all that, but 'twere no go."

"An' the kid?"

"He's down town in ————'s. He chased me once but give me up. I don't know what he'd do if he'd get me, but I fight shy of 'im, ———— though if I wouldn't 'bout as lief get scooped an' have it out. I 'spose if I'd go back I could get something to if 'twere only street cleanin'."

Jack laughed.

"Parker, you're crazy, you know as well as me that before a week you'd be back sweepin' out Hi Davis's saloon fer your drinks 'stead o' sweepin' the streets. You're keen as a hound when you smell de liquor clear out here in this pro-hi-bition country. In dere you'd go by de first place, mebbby, turn your head and hold your breath, but the second or third 'ud get you——"

"I'm afraid so."

"Now, weren't that the real cause of yer notion to quit de bum—weren't it a kind of blind excuse fer your goin' back to de city? Cussed if I ever saw such a dry country. I don't blame you, pard, I——"

"Damn it, no, man," cried the other, angrily, jumping up. "I hate liquor, I tell you, I wish de country wuz as dry of it as yonder town. Haven't I got a good cause. It got me down and is holding me down, so I can't do nuthin', or be nuthin' but a bum," and he threw himself upon the ground again in a hopeless fashion.

"Funny how jes' that little girl riled me up so. Wish you could a-seen her, Jack."

"Now see here, Bill, I didn't go in fer to put you out. If a man wants to give up trampin' and boozin', I say go ahead. I've had de same feelin's myself, but

didn't say nuthin' 'cause I knew it wuz no use, you know. I'm favorable to doin' right, but, at de same time, haven't got de speshul knack of doin' it—but mebby you might make it go. If you could jest hire to some farmer right around here now, 'twould be the best for you."

"No, I couldn't, I know; let it all go, Jack."

"Now let me see. I weren't tryin' to discourage you, Parker, mebby you could get to be janitor to some buildin' or something that way if we'd strike a bigger town; or get to scrub out de stores, or whitewash; or ye could mebbe get a few little trinkets to peddle an' work de ole soldier dodge for customers; or if yer thought it best, you could go back an' try yer own idea, though I'd be lonesome without you, and I don't believe it 'ud work, either."

"No, I'll stay here with you, it wuz a crazy notion, Jack, but honest, I wish I wuz dead."

"Oh, well now, yer better off'n you might be. I've seen big men 'ut I'd rather not be than you, and I've seen and heard of places that I'd rather not be at, than here on this nice green grass wid de leafy trees, and the big blue sky above us, an' the yellow sun just a showin' a little gold along one edge o' it."

"Now, the best thing fer gents like us is allus to be cheerful and to have a motto. I'll tell yer what mine is, pard. It's help yerself if you can, an' if you can't, don't kick—an' I heard an Irishman say one once 'ut stuck in my craw 'cause de meanin's about de same as mine, I guess, and it 'ud be first rate fer you. It were—Be aisy, an' if you can't be aisy, be as aisy as yer

can—so cheer up, pard, it were only an off day with you.”

His companion had stretched himself full length upon the grass with his face turned in an opposite direction.

“The News Recorder” of a neighboring town had upon the third day after this a heading in its local news, “Tramps and Fights; An Exciting Time,” and then an explanation in detail and in the semi-humorous tone adopted by many country town editors who have a joking acquaintance with everybody and ample space in their sheets to fill up.

“For a long time this town has seemed to be overrun in a heedless sort of fashion with tramps, the Wayside Willies, the Dusty Rhoades, the Hurry Harries and others of the leisure-lived gents have made this a regular stamping ground and have subsisted upon the hand-outs of our hospitable citizens, until they became a nuisance, and the warm generosity of the heart, in some cases, lapsed into an artificial and outwardly cold form of giving, and some of our most popular citizens were tormented in their dreams by visions of travel-stained visitors and by hearing the small whining voice.

“It seems that our stockyards in the east part of town had been inhabited for several days by a small colony of them and on last evening they were still further reinforced by another small detachment. So, either in their exuberance of joy at meeting or in the unrestrained desire to honor and do justice to old

friends they proceeded to have a spree, in other words a banquet with liquid refreshments, though it is not known where they got the latter, and then as a fitting climax to the event, and in a praiseworthy effort on their part to keep busy, part of them broke into Johns & Son's general store, and sorted out about forty dollars worth of merchandise and cash that they thought would be available to their use, or perhaps thinking they could sell the goods more easily and quickly than our friend Johns.

"Then this same gang called at a house in the south part of town and demanded some money and jewelry. Mrs. Newt Smith was alone in the house, except for the sleeping children, and was frightened almost to death. She gave them all the money in the house and her silver spoons. This seemed to satisfy them and they moved on. But on the way, just for a joke, they stopped a man who was hurrying home, and after threatening to make his eyes stick out still further, they rifled his pockets and relieved him of his gold time-piece.

"Strangely enough this man was no other than Mr. Newt Smith, and strangely enough, when he got home safely and learned that his wife had had visitors, from the double joke therein implied, his calm unboisterous nature seemed for a time to suffer a relapse and his words were not calculated for the quietness of a prayer meeting, while an unprejudiced witness said this morning that in his great joy he jumped up and down, with his hands twisted in his hair, and that even when his hat rolled off onto the

floor, in the lightness of his heart, he danced upon it, seemingly unconscious of its intrinsic value.

"Be that as it may, he danced over to the residence of our Marshal Jones and knocked so gently upon the door that it shivered upon its hinges; and upon that gentleman's appearance eagerly told him his humorous story.

"The Marshal was so tickled that he could hardly get dressed, but, summoning his presence of mind, he declared, with the intuition of a sleuth hound of the city, and with the boldness of a dog after a cat, that the jokers were hidden in the impentable gloom of the stockyards and that he would go after them.

"This he did with great skill, and with some help succeeded in rounding up four of the gentlemen whom he discovered there. One a tall and, in the blackness of night, unearthly-looking fellow, because of his white face, eluded the grasp of the marshal so quickly and disappeared so completely that he swore it was a ghost and thought nothing more of it.

"It was found however that a great fat individual of the party confessed to having such a looking partner, and as a freight train passed through going east a short time after this, some irreverent individuals have hinted that this disappearance might be accounted for substantially and not spiritually.

"Luck be to him, however, shade, night-mare, fantasie of our doughty Marshal's brain, freak, skeleton of a side show, or whatever he is, and let him go as swiftly and stay as long as it pleases his fancy.

"It has turned out that the gang who had committed

the most mischief had left town and they have since been apprehended south of here, but these victims of our Marshal's courage have, no doubt, been engaged in some of the thieving that has been going on in this vicinity of late, and will probably luxuriate for the next thirty or sixty days in the county jail.

"The editor of the News Recorder wishes to express his sympathy for Mr. and Mrs. Smith and Johns & Son in this occasion of loss, and to hope that the course of justice will bring them the returns due them."

CHAPTER XXVIII

A strange thing had occurred at the mill and it had happened in this wise: A somewhat flashily dressed, unknown man, had been noticed, one morning, engaged in talk with the overseer of that section in which Helen and Sade were employed, and who had afterward walked, slowly, up and down the line of workers, but, instead of seeming interested in the machines and work, as was the usual visitor, had looked over each girl, as he passed, with a cool, searching, if not impudent, stare.

This look, most of the girls returned with interest, and some added thereto winks and grins, for, in bashfulness they did not excel and were not to be outdone in impoliteness. As he passed, there were semi-audible whispers, as to whether he was hunting him a wife, or only hunting a new type of beauty for de ladies' page of de newspapers, and also, comments as to his personal appearance and actions.

But, whatever his business, the man seemed to single out Sade from amongst the others, and, after regarding her for a moment, he spoke to her, and, then, Sade threw her machine out of gear and the two went over to where the overseer was standing, and the three engaged in earnest conversation, for some time.

It was amusing to see the curiosity of the girls.

Over half of them found some pretext for shutting down their machines, and listening with all their ears. One or two made errands that would take them into the vicinity of the trio in whom they were interested, and their movements, as well as the remarks made by the girls watching them, were laughable to a degree. But, they, after staying as long as they dared, came back unsuccessful and this called out various remarks that were disparaging to them, and also very uncomplimentary to "luck" which was so against them.

Then, despairing of hearing the coveted "gab," they openly fell to discussing the probable causes of it, and to cutting such capers as only such girls would have thought of. The overseer, or "de boss," as they all call him, was watching them, fiercely, out of the corner of his eye, and had started, once or twice, toward them, but had been called back each time, by some earnest question from Sade, or some remark of the strangers, and, each time, the girls only grinned and laughed the harder, and dared him, with much extravagant language, to come on.

Helen was one of the few who kept their machines going, but she was laughing so hard that she could hardly attend it. At last "de boss broke away" and came down upon the others with swear words, so that, with much suppressed giggling, they all flew back to their work.

Sade came down the row, eliciting from each one she passed an anxious question and some impolite admonitions from "de boss," who was closely following her, so she did not dare to stop, except to speak

to Helen a minute, but she gave the others "a way up" look, as they expressed it, that made them envious and more furious.

She had whispered in Helen's ear, "I'm goin' away with this chap; he's give me another job. Tell the folks, and I'll be home Sunday and don't worry. You'll stay at de house and see me, Sunday, won't you? Promise."

"Yes," Helen had answered.

"Well, I'll make it square with you, then, Good-bye."

Then she had gone, and Helen was left to wonder what the other job could be. She was besieged, at noon, by questions and was forced to tell, over and over, what little she knew, but this was not very satisfactory, and there was much speculation, as well as much grumbling, at Sade's failure to give them even a hint.

However, another girl came to take Sade's place and, the vacancy filled, the steady hum of the work, and the daily routine of their lives, tended to obliterate the strangeness of the event, and they came to talk less of it.

Sunday came and with it Sade. Her meeting with Helen, before the Maguire home, was affectionate in that it consisted of an embrace that left Helen almost breathless. She exchanged a few words with her mother, said, "Hello," to Den and her father; gave Alf a good squeeze, and then drew Helen into her little room and began to explain.

"The man was manager for a show, down town, and,

being acquainted, somehow, with 'de boss', at the mill, had come out looking for a girl to fill up with and, thinking she wuz big enough, had jumped onto her." This was Sade's version of it, and she had brought home the costume she was to wear, and forthwith put it on for Helen's admiration and, later, for that of the rest of the family, though she regretfully explained that, it didn't look near so nice on her, in the dark rooms, as on the stage with the footlights a'goin.

"She was only a chorus girl, an' jest had to march around, though it wuz pretty hard to keep in your place," she explained, "fer starin' about and gettin' your partners mixed." She had had to sing a little, too, and, with a little coaxing from Helen, went over her piece, in her naturally deep and rich, but very untrained, voice. "Gee," she said, "some o' the girls know more about music in a minute an' I could learn all my days, an' it makes 'em mad 'cause we can't come in, just right, they growl away an' we can't say nuthin', 'cause de boss, there, is a man that 'ud fright you, he fairly makes you jump."

Helen, after glancing over the chorus, sang it through in a way that brought forth much profuse admiration, and extravagant exclamations, from Sade. And then Helen tried to show her about the music, and the time, and drilled her on it, showing her the mistakes she made.

"If I could only just have you with me," Sade cried, despairingly. "There ain't anybody I know, there, not a one, and you can't tell how bad I felt not

to see you, and, then, you'll be lonesome, here, without me, too."

Helen replied that she had been very much so already. "Well, why couldn't you come? I m goin' to strike the boss for a place fer you; they don't all have to be as big as me to b'long," she admitted, with a grim smile. "There's some little ones, and you could sing so much better, too, and you could help me out, an' we'd be together. Wouldn't it be fine?"

"Of course," she said, in a calmer tone, "it ain't just the right kind of a place for you; some of 'em booze and they are, most of 'em, a bad lot. 'Twouldn't be just you're style, to prance around, amongst 'em, with a dress on like this, but still, you can't brag much on this crowd, here. De mill work is on de bum, for such as you, and if we wuz together we wouldn't mind anything else."

This appeal came to Helen more strongly than some would have imagined. Her present life, without Sade, was intolerable and not to be thought of. In her society days, the theatre had been the source of much of her pleasure and thought, and the glamour of stage life, as she remembered it, presented such a dazzling contrast to her dull life, and surroundings, that there was almost an irresistible temptation to fly from one to the other, if any opportunity should present itself. So that, while she stood up beside Sade's heroic figure, and complained that she was not large enough, and said that mill work was good enough for her, etc., her face was flushed and her heart beat the faster from Sade's words.

She saw that her companion was considerably dazzled by the prospects of a career behind the footlights. The roughness of the stage, and the dissipation of the actors, which shocks so many aspirants in that direction from the higher walks of life, were, to her, because of their past commonness in her life, subjects of little surprise and concern,—but, at the same time, Helen had fresh cause for admiration of the good sense and strength of character she showed, as she spoke of the advantages and disadvantages of her new occupation.

For a long time, that Sunday, these two girls sat in their room talking;—recalling the past, discussing the present, and wondering and planning as to the future; sometimes merry, Helen laughing and singing and Sade “cutting up”; sometimes sitting quietly, regarding each other, their hands interlocked, seeming to come closer together in that deeper friendship and communion than ever before.

To both, in these hours, there was a feeling of sadness, for they realized that this was the crisis of their friendship; that already there had been a parting in their paths of life, and that, unless quickly reunited, they would, in all probability, diverge rapidly. Once Sade had declared that she would give the “new boss de shake,” and come back to Helen, but in another moment, she was planning again how Helen was to come and stay with her, down town, and go on “de stage.”

After dinner, Sade went around to see some of “de old sports,” as she figuratively called the girls of her

old crowd, and Helen took her accustomed Sunday afternoon sleep, so she did not see her again until almost evening, and then Sade was obliged to go that she might be ready for practice Monday morning, Helen went with her as far as, on account of the approaching darkness, Sade would let her, and returned, feeling as friendless and lonely as on that first morning that she had come to the mill.

Sade had, evidently, improved her time that afternoon, for, the next morning, Helen found that the news had already spread amongst the girls, and as in a prison, when one of the prisoners has escaped, there was much excitement and commotion, because this girl had left her dull life for that of the dazzling brightness of a chorus girl.

There was the lucid and ludicrous description of how "fly" Sade was; how purty her clothes were, and how big her salary—to be listened to, from those envied girls who had, personally, talked with her. And there were varied exclamations, and recollections and reminiscences of shows and actin', from the others. At noon they talked about it and at night, after the work was over, they lingered in the old mill absorbed in the pros and cons of this, to them, exciting subject.

Helen had staid, too, and was listening with amusement to the talk when it was proposed by one that they should all go, some night, to see Sade. This was greeted with cheers and then they fell to discussing whether they should wait until Saturday night, when they should all have their pay, or,

whether they could go at once. Some were lamenting having so quickly spent their last week's wages; some were advocating one night, some another; the more impatient planning to leave behind any improvident ones who could not "show de coin."

But, in the midst of this confusion, Susie Himet, a girl who, with unexpected firmness, had assumed leadership since Sade's withdrawal, began to pound, with all her might, with a window stick, upon one of the work tables, and, after a while, they began to quiet down to see what Sue wanted. It proved that she wanted a collection and, after making this understood, all agreed that it was for the best, and set to work figuring out, to the last cent, what they could give. Some, at Sue's appeal, to "dish up" recklessly throwing in all, though they knew they would go hungry before the week was over. It happened that Helen had spent but little of her last week's wages as yet, but she had left it in her room, so, when, after carefully figuring up car fare and tickets, Sue had announced that they were nearly three dollars short, and Helen had volunteered to supply that amount, her generosity elicited cheers and comments of admiration.

This settled, some of the girls were for going yet that night, but cooler counsel prevailed and they decided to wait until Tuesday night. So, upon the next evening, after hurried suppers, they gathered together in the old engine room, having obtained permission to do so, where there was much whispering and laughing and jumping up and down, and much good natured raillery and complaining at each new

comer, that "they wuz so late, or their bunnit didn't set on straight, or their dress wuzn't de latest color and wouldn't harmonize wid de gas light on it."

At last they were all there. Susie had asked about all of them, from the biggest to the smallest; "If yer here just grin," she had said and they had cheered her for that for they were all grinning. They walked until they came to the cars, and then, finding they could not all get into one car, separated, to reunite down town, where they were, with difficulty, lined up by Sue and again counted, as, in her distraction of mind, she had forgotten how many they were. So, at last, the tickets were bought, the door opened before them, and they filed down the aisle and seated themselves, in a long row, before the painted canvas. There were great thrills of expectation and happiness running through them, as they gazed expectantly at the great curtain or about them at the rich furnishings and gilded, decorated ceiling. But, the people seemed so terribly slow and uncaring that before the show had begun some of the girls, tired from the day's work, were beginning to twist about anxiously in their seats, while some were whispering to their neighbors that they were about starved, not having had any supper, either because of their excitement or because of the lack of it.

But, with the first strains of music from the orchestra, all of this was forgotten. Helen was gratifying a hunger, that had been greater, and of longer duration, than the physical hunger of her companions. She had been raised a musician; she had the warm blood

of one which beats madly, or softly, as the harmony; she had nerves that tingled ecstatically under its persuasion; she had feet that had once been wont to glide gracefully, lightly, borne upward by the passion of the music, and now she sat enraptured and enchanted by it.

Then, after a tremulous little ting-a-ling, the curtain came up, disclosed a villainous looking old tramp expostulating with a negro servant, because of the unsuitableness of a hand-out. And, then, a little later, they were joined by the "Missus," the three being the principals in the opening comic sketch. After this came the more pretentious plot of the show, with specialties of dancing and juggling at the close of the acts. It was time for the last, now, and in this was to be the grand chorus in which Sade was to show herself and her voice. Helen looked down the row of her companions. They were sitting on the front edges of their chairs, staring, that not a motion might be lost. How coarse they looked, some of them with their mouths gaping open, and their coarse red hands upon the seats in front of them, Susie Himet's hair was twisted in a shape that would have been hard to define geometrically, and Mamie Munn's seemed to be just ready to take a tumble down her back, Sallie Hick's old bonnet was a disgrace to humanity. (The girls had told her that she found it, one day, in an old rubbish box, and had worn it, now, for three years.) How different they looked from the surrounding crowd! People had been watching them, between the acts, and, even now, as she looked about, they were gazing

inquisitively at her. Did she belong in that rough group? No wonder they stared.

But, the curtain is up and here they come twenty of them, from two opposite doorways, meeting, with a bow, in the center; ten in tights and boots, representing gallants and cavaliers; ten, and amongst them Sade, with their short dresses, high-heeled slippers and red stockings, moving forward with the quick, firm step, required in a ballet; pairing, separating, crossing and intercrossing; stopping in some combination, for a minute, except for the twinkling feet keeping the time, and then, at a crash from the accompaniment, away they go again with a bound, their bright costumes flashing in all the changing and beautiful symmetries of color that can delight the onlooker.

Presently all except two, who came forward and performed some fancy dances, had lined up in a sort of semicircle at the rear of the stage. Then all burst out in that song in which Helen had drilled Sade, and, though the words were mostly indistinguishable, it was a very pleasant mingling of voices, and showed that there were enough in the twenty who knew about music to carry the melody successfully.

A last bewildering serpentine twist about the stage and they made their exit, but, at the sound of the deafening recall, came back, and again went through some of their maneuverings and out again and, all too soon for the girls, the curtain came rolling down.

They began to rub their eyes and come to themselves, for, in their interest, some of them had completely forgotten their identity. Sade had evidently

started as she recognized the row. Susie Himet had thrown up her hand and had only been prevented from calling out by the presence of mind of the girl next to her, who had clapped her hand over her mouth. But Sade had not allowed herself to forget her duty and had gone through her part without hesitation or mistake, so that the girls were all proud of her. "Who'd a'thought she could a'done it!" "Sade's all right, ain't she?" they had said to each other. They could hardly believe that she had been one of them and that less than a week had wrought this transformation in her.

With a last crash the orchestra had ceased playing and the people were rapidly leaving the house. The girls had all risen and were standing, wondering if they couldn't see Sade, when she came, and, pushing the curtain aside, told them, in a loud whisper, that they would have to go outside and wait, that she would come out as soon as possible.

So they retired to the shadow of an alley way and, when she joined them, all crowded about her with congratulations, but she pushed through them all to Helen and, putting her arm about her neck, asked her how she liked it.

"Very well," Helen replied. "You did splendidly."

"Oh, 'tain't hard," Sade answered, overcome more by this quiet compliment than all the rest, "I happened to git through without fallin' down to-night—I meant to see the boss about you but I ain't had a chance, I will, though; I think you'd like this better'n workin' at the mill, wouldn't you?"

Helen answered indefinitely that she would, in some ways, and then they talked all together and in pairs until the pleading of the younger ones that they were dead sleepy, and starving hungry, became so strong that they had to separate and wend their weary way back to their homes.

CHAPTER XXIX

The evening after they had visited the theater Susie Himet walked home with Helen, after the work had "let out." Since she had, to some extent, taken Sade's place, she had become more friendly to Helen, and Helen, while she found, on closer acquaintance with the girl, more desirable qualities in her than she had dreamed of, would have been grateful for any kind of a friend, almost, who could take Sade's place, and diminish the loneliness she had felt since her leaving. They had gone into her little room and Susie, after examining her few belongings, and commenting upon the attempt to beautify and decorate the room, had returned to the subject of their last night's escapade, and was recalling and laughing noisily at the jokes and the funny situations, and indulging in exclamations of wonder and envy of Sade. "Who'd a tho't it," she kept repeating and, yet, she never seemed, for an instant, to have thought it possible for herself to have risen to such a high position of fame.

Suddenly, she turned to Helen: "Why couldn't you go in de chorus? You're pretty; prettier'n Sade wuz; nice shiney hair; an' pretty eyes; an' yer quick; an' can walk like them, an' move around better. You're slimmer an' prettier all over."

Ah, that was why Helen had been so silent that day,

and so preoccupied. That was the idea, that had been whirling so swiftly through her brain, with all its conflicting questions, doubts and advantages. Why could she not, to be sure? She could sing those songs; she could march and trip about as lightly and gracefully, as any of them? She was surely as pretty, and, if she were called to it, she could dance. She had seen so many of the dances in her better days, and had been wont to practice them, then, before her mirror, just for fun.

And yet there were thoughts and considerations that held her back. Though she was now making so little of her religion, she still held on to it or, at least, the name of it (as so many do when they have almost forsaken the shadow of its influence), hoping that, some day, she would be in a position again to enjoy its benefits, and feel its power. She realized instinctively that, should she take that step to the stage, she would be crossing the dead line, as it were, and exposing her remaining faith to its death.

Her trip down town, the sights of the streets, the stores and the cars, had brought the fever of her old life into her blood, and she had been thinking again of Harry Spencer and some of her other old church friends, and the question came back to her: Should she go back to them? What would they think of her? Had they changed as much as she? They would forget her, if they had not already. She thought of the joy when first she had been saved, and the pleasure of Christian fellowship and friendship, but now, this bond that binds hearts best together, was, with her,

somewhat of an uncertain quantity. A doubt leads the way to a multitude of doubts, and possibly the feeling of her conscience that she had not treated her higher life just as Harry Spencer would have advised had served to put a greater distance between him and her than the few miles of city streets that intervened.

The spirit of God had once come into her life, with an uplifting power that had rid her of longing for the theater and dancing. She had had the solemn and impressive, but beautiful, hymns of the church to supplant the catchy, sprightly and often naughty songs of the stage. She had had good thoughts, serious considerations and holy desires so overcome the old careless, aimless, pleasure seeking in her life, that, even after the deadening influence of her present surroundings, this glamour and show of the stage could not awaken her old passions and appetite, without arousing in conflict the better emotions and principles within her.

And so they had driven her to argue: Why couldn't she have just as much religion upon the stage as in the noisy factory and in her present unpleasant surroundings? Or, at the least, wouldn't she? Her life's joy and pleasure had greatly diminished and would soon be gone entirely. If there was a God, she must rebel, and grow cold toward him, if he kept her in misery. There were coarseness and indelicate jokes upon the stage, but they were not so bad, perhaps, as she was compelled to listen to each day. She knew the curtain and the footlights hid many a crime, but there were many committed in her neighborhood and she

was as much hurt by them as she could be if she were amongst those who show life's comedies and cater to men's tastes. In her increased knowledge of life, and the ways of the world, she understood, better than the girls about her, that the life of an actress, and especially of a chorus girl, might be emptiness and unprofitableness, and that the fame of it was really small and unsatisfying. She was aware that the glitter of the stage glittered only from the front, and yet, whatever they said of the disappointment behind the scenes, surely their lives and surroundings were brighter and less irksome than hers. The thought of appearing in a short costume or, possibly tights, was averse to her sense of modesty, and yet that same modesty had been greatly shocked and deadened lately and what, after all, did it matter?

These thoughts had been occupying her mind so that, at Susie's question, she answered quickly: "I wonder why I couldn't?" And then she began to sing the song she had heard the night before, with a saucy shaking of her head, and beating time with her foot, and, as the words came back to her, putting more spirit into them than she had shown for some time, forgetting, almost, where she was.

When she had finished she found that her companion was too surprised to express any very clear or lucid criticism and, because she enjoyed the look of admiration in her companion's face, Helen quickly pushed her bed, as closely as possible into a corner of the room, and, advancing lightly into the vacant place she had made, gave that same song and dance which

she remembered she had once given in the basement room of the department store, and which had seemed to so pain Harry Spencer and at the same time to delight little Mertie Jones and all the others.

She had looked around in triumph upon their admiring faces, and listened to their compliments, and now she saw the same expression upon the face of her one auditor and heard the same applause, though expressed in rougher tones and less grammatically, without one watching in displeasure as then.—Yes, there was One watching above, a Friend. She could not forget that and it brought the twinge of conscience even as she had felt it then.

So, she kept to her old place, thinking about the proposed change a good deal, and yet striving not to, and to put it out of her hopes. Some days she felt anxious to go, and her hands trembled and her heart thrilled as the hum of the mill seemed to give place to strains of lively music and song, and she hummed them away to herself, while the prosaic roughness of her surroundings faded before the more beautiful mind pictures, of an almost forgotten past, or of a conjured-up future. Other days she felt that her place, though hard and distasteful, was best.

As for Susie Himet, ever since she had listened to, and watched Helen, upon that night, she had been convinced, beyond any doubt, that she once had been, was now, or soon would be, an actress and to all of Helen's protests and denials she turned a deaf ear. She told all the girls and fellows of the neighborhood of it and with such effort that Helen found herself

besieged at every favorable and many unfavorable opportunities to sing 'em a song or to dance for 'em, and, though she excused herself as often as possible, she must please them sometimes and every compliance with their requests was greeted with great applause and rough but sincere expressions of admiration.

Some of the youths of the factory were, as it was expressed, "awful gone on her," and had she shown the least return of that feeling there would have been envy and jealousy supreme amongst both sexes, but she had, from the first, repulsed one and all, acting as though unconscious of their near presence—a course that had greatly chagrined the youths but had been productive of quietness and satisfaction amongst their female friends.

And unlike the more ignorant or less experienced girl, whom this praise and attention would have puffed up, and caused to put on airs, she went steadily to and from her work as though unconscious of any change, and, instead of parading her grace and accomplishments, she seemed always desirous of hiding them, and withal was so modest and unassuming that she retained the favor of those about her.

They had expected her to go at once to the theater and secure a position; they were proud of Sade and would be more so of her for they felt she would do them even greater credit—but still she could not bring herself to do it; her conscience was vigorously protesting and she saw, if she was to have any pleasure in such a life, she must still further deaden or destroy

that conscience, and this she hesitated about doing, fearfully, as some would at taking a human life knowing the consequences.

Such considerations as these had never entered Susie Himet's head. The theater seemed to her the summit of desire, and she could not see why Helen should hold back, being sure, as she was, to get a place. For herself the factory life was all right and for most of her companions it would be foolishness to want anything better, but this girl was different, her place was on the stage and she ought to be there.

She expressed this in substance, one night, in Helen's room, saying that "she wuz actin' queer about it and that if she got de place all de girls wuz comin' to see her and Sade again."

Helen explained that she didn't have time to go and see about a place; that, if she quit at the mill, she might not readily get a place and would likely starve, as her finances were none too promising anyhow.

She had said this in a sort of joking way and Sue, whether perceiving this or not, had not answered, but it turned out had gone right to work to remove these objections. On Saturday night Helen was given notice that there was "to be a meetin' an' she must be there or it 'ud be a fizzle. From the prominence" accorded to her in this invitation, Helen wondered if they were going to try to get her to "perform" for them again and answered somewhat wearily that if that was their intention they would be disappointed as she did not feel like it. The girl who had been detailed by Sue to invite her, denied even having

wanted her to, and, though it was plain to be seen she wanted to tell about it, did not dare to on account of instructions.

It was to be held in the old engine room and just the "swells" invited who had gone to see Sade, and so, after supper, she went down and found them almost all there before her. Two huge greasy torches were providing ample light, and throwing a flickering, and something of a ghastly, glimmer upon the faces of the crowd. But what cared they? Alternately dancing, playing some game, scrapping or debating, they passed the evening just as the fancy seized them, and Helen was drawn into their merriment, put on to their jokes, and held up her side "in de scraps" with a freedom of "gab" that was delightful to see, but, all the time, she was wondering what was the real cause of this convention. Susie had said, with a grin, that it "wuz just to pass a soshul time," but this had not deceived her, for she had noticed them whispering together, about something that "wuzn't in de jokes," and had caught unguarded expressions that showed her they were expecting something to happen later.

Presently, when some of them had begun to get a little tired, Sue procured a stick and began to pound upon a board with it to call the house to order, though she need not have pounded so long or hard, this time, for they were expecting this and quieted as soon as they got the signal.

Then, without much formality, and bashfully, or perhaps we could better say awkwardly, Sue stood out before them all and began to talk alternately to

Helen and to the crowd. To the latter she had first explained Helen's position, as she saw it, then to Helen she said, "Now, ut de gang has come together here, to-night, and has had a good time, they wishes me to say as how we want to help you out on your place. There is a girl by de name of Jess Roush that wuz out of a place, and she can come next week an' take your place in de mill. It's all arranged an' de boss don't care for she's on to de work, an' then, of course, if you didn't get in anywheres why Jess 'ud quit, but there ain't any danger, I told Jess the place wuz solid for her all right."

"An' then," she continued, "seein' ut you helped us all to go and see Sade t'uther night, by chippin' in yer coin, we want to put in and start you out right, an' so I'll pass de hat, and I want everyone to show their 'preciation to the most of their ability." This was a climax not to be belittled by further words and, so, Sue wisely desisted, and procuring a hat made the rounds, much as she had on that other night, and presented the proceeds, a motley collection of nickles and dimes and even pennies, to Helen with a little over-conscious air of friendliness and patronage.

Helen had been quietly standing in the rear, watching these girls, as the hat was passed to them, putting in their contributions eagerly, and with a smile of good will at her, thought it was a sacrifice to them, not only because of the money given but, because of the knowledge that they were sending her, whom they so much admired, and whose friendship they prized, away. Indeed one of the girls had burst into tears, some-

thing which they very seldom did in the presence of their companions, and hid her face on her arm and cried out "that she didn't want her to go away to the show, or nowheres else." "Don't be a baby," Susie had replied with all the gruffness of a commander, "we ain't either, but it's de place she wants to go and we ain't a'goin' to hinder, in spite of privut feelin's."

This weird scene had been very impressive to Helen and had affected her so that tears had almost come to her eyes. They were going to have her go, whether or no. Well, fate seems to settle our lives, anyhow.

She called up all the winning subtlety of her tongue and spoke to them with the varying, harmonious and well modulated inflections of voice induced by the emotions she felt—that makes an eloquence which is the greatest charm, though, perhaps, rarely found in that profession she was to join—so that many of those to whom she spoke could not hide the tears that glistened in their eyes.

She had thanked them; she had spoken of her stay amongst them, and their friendship; she had promised to go as they wished; had spoken of their parting; had hoped they would remember her, and had added certain words that seemed a little strange to her as she uttered them concerning a meeting in another world and the value of virtue and "straightness" of character. She had spoken, sometimes in their terms of speech, mixing the most touching sentences (those that would have graced an oration in her school days) with words that would have shocked and surprised a school audience immensely, though, with her present

audience, they only gave further zest and increased beauty.

It was a talk of which these girls spoke in later years and by which they were changed to a greater or less degree for the better.

Sunday was a very quiet day with Helen. Sade did not come home and Helen had seen or heard nothing of her since their visit down town so she did not know what was the cause of her non-appearance, but, if nothing happened, she was to go to her on the morrow. She was trying to realize this and looking forward to it, yet wishing as night came again that this was not to be the last in the home of the Maguires.

Daylight brings a reassuring courage and so, in the morning, Helen set about with a zest making final arrangements for her departing, packing the belongings she had acquired into a suitable bundle for carrying. As she went by the mill she waved her hand at some heads that hastily appeared at the windows and then disappeared back to work, but this was not satisfactory, either to them or to herself, and so, she went back, and up the familiar old stairs, everything seeming to stand out with peculiar charm, because of her leaving, and, with a wan smile, she nodded good-bye to her late companions standing by each, for a moment, though they said little.

At last she had gotten so far down the street that the mill appeared only a black spot to her and signaling a passing car she, in a short time, reached Sade's locality.

She went first to her boarding place but the landlady

informed her that Sade was away practicing, so, after some inquiry, Helen had found the entrance to the stage and was wondering whether she ought to go in or not, when a man came out, passing her without so much as a look and so slamming the swinging door, that it, in its opening, gave her a glance inside.

She could see several persons lounging about inside though she could not discover Sade, and decided that the rehearsal was not in progress. Pushing inside she went quietly up to the nearest man she saw and asked if she could see Sadie Maguire. This individual regarded her with a listless stare and grunted out a negative reply, but, a girl, who was near enough to overhear the question, laughing at Helen's confusion, pointed her finger toward one of the opposite wings and answered, "She's over yonder chinning McArthur."

Wondering at these words Helen crossed over and found Sade engaged in a lively conversation with the man who had come to the mill and engaged her, and a chill struck her as she saw them. She had from the first disliked the looks of the man.

She did not know whether she ought to interrupt them, but, in a moment, Sade saw her, and, after parting with her companion, came to her, and gave her a welcome as boisterous and ready as ever, though, somehow, there was a note of the usual quick sympathy left out and a colder something put in and Helen felt this keenly, realizing at once that a different kind of friendship had come into Sade's ardent nature and changed it a little.

Helen inquired at once why she had not come home on the previous day, and Sade replied that she had gone to the park and around sight seeing with Mr. McArthur; that she was sorry she could not come home but—and here she dropped her eyes from Helen's in a way that was new to her and continued in a tone that savored of defiance to the tenderer emotions, and touch of conscience that came to her in Helen's presence—"I couldn't go both places, and—here she omitted to finish the sentence, but her silence was fully as expressive as words, "He's a fine man, all right," she was saying. "I told him about de other push cuttin' up at my singin' an' he put it to 'em, straight, that they'd have to stop it er get out, he told 'em I wuz as pretty a girl on de stage as any of 'em, and good at marchin', an' that I hadn't had no opportunities to learn singin' but that I wuz fast at learnin', and some more o' that style o' talk, an', so, now, they just look out o' the corners o' their eyes at me, an' I look back at them just as hard. They don't say nuthin', but, I c'n hear 'em, sometimes, sayin' I'm de boss's pet an' such low down mean things."

Helen had listened with surprise and dismay to this, it was so different from what she had expected.

"Is there any show for me?" she asked.

"No there ain't here, an' that's square, I asked de boss an' he said he wuz sorry, but there wuzn't another place. He give me de address of another place, though, where they use lots o' girls'n said this note, if you'd give it to the head boss there, 'ud give you a stand-in. Gee, there's de bell'n I must go."

A small bell had tapped, as she indicated, and the girls were coming, hurriedly and in various costumes, from all over the house, and Sade took her place with them, after a parting that Helen could not have thought possible from her—Sade—who had almost “taken de hystericks,” as the girls said, at her speaking of leaving the Maguire home, a month or two before this.

Helen stood in the wing and watched them as they were drilled by the man whom Sade had once described as being one “who ’ud fright you,” and she saw that besides being very energetic he was very free with abuse and profanity if his ideas weren’t promptly met. She also discovered the other girls “looking out of the corners of their eyes,” at Sade, and realized, with horror, that this creation of harmony, bright costumes, pretty smiling girls, graceful forms and seemingly friendly bows, not to speak of the song which had so pleased her the other night, was the product of these carelessly clad, sweating creatures, who marched sullenly about, under the orders and cursing of an ugly little old man, their hearts bitter within them because of sensations of envy, jealousy and natural hatred.

Mr. McArthur was standing in the opposite wing watching them and there was a smile on his face, sometimes, that would be hard to describe by words; Sade, if she had been free and unprejudiced, would have said it was “a ornery look,” but she did not see it as Helen did and, if she had, it would have been from a different standpoint and with a different light.

Then presently a man and woman came in and stood

by Helen. The woman was an actress who was to occupy a short period of time in their new production, by a performance of her own, and seemed in the daylight heavy set and clumsy in form, and coarse and dissipated in face, and was, as she proved herself, very coarse and uncultured in spirit, for after watching the rehearsal for a moment she turned her attention to Helen for the fun of it, and talked to her and to her companion who was drunk and laughed foolishly and indiscriminately at her sayings in a way that, by its coarseness and indecency, was evidently intended to put Helen to flight. She laughed raspingly and forcedly at what she meant to be funny, and made remarks on the chorus that were disgusting in the extreme. Helen left her and the place, shocked and disheartened.

The change in Sade had been a shock to her. The depravity of character of some of the chorus gave her an added feeling of sadness, and the downright cold-hearted wickedness of this woman, that seemed a product of the immeasurable depths of despair, was that last straw to complete a very heavy burden on her heart.

"Was her life to be amongst such," she kept asking herself, and she was wishing herself back in that place she had given up at the mill. But what would the girls think? They had made sacrifice to have her come and she was not doing right by them. Maybe, too, she had imagined Sade worse than she was, and she would be all right later.

These last thoughts were what induced her, after

some hesitation, to enter the office of the other place, which was profusely decorated with lithographs and posters, and where the manager, a comparatively young fellow, sat with his feet upon a table, spitting with varied success as the floor testified, at a distant spittoon. She presented her note and stated her errand.

"Oh, Jack sent you," he said, as he finished reading the former. "Got any photographs?"

Helen shook her head.

"You haven't experience—you never came out in tights?"

She replied in the negative, her face crimsoning so that he laughed, saying:

"I thought you wasn't an old hand."

Then he took his feet down from their elevated position and, turning, spoke more kindly to her.

"If you wanted to begin, I expect I could crowd you in though I've really about enough, but you'd—I'd advise you not, I couldn't afford to pay you much—Can't you get better work?"

This man evidently had some regard for humanity in its higher sense, or had a conscience that was reachable and had felt Helen's comparative superiority, leading him to give this advice opposite to business instincts, and Helen thanked him and went out into the street with conflicting emotions. What now? What now?

There seemed an answer to this repeated question in the steady, rap, rap, rap of a Salvation Army drum. There they go with their tattered flag and weather-

stained banner, their blue dresses and poke bonnets and brass buttons, stepping cheerily along to their marching music. She hastened out upon the crossing and looked eagerly into their faces. Most of them she did not know but there was the old captain and Miss Ames, her face as quiet and beautiful as ever. She stood and watched them as they went,—suddenly up went the horns and tambourines and there came floating back to her that old exultant chorus,

“Follow, follow, we will follow Jesus,
Anywhere, everywhere, we will follow Him.

A great revulsion of feeling seemed to come over her, and she turned and followed them to their hall, and throughout their meeting she sat seemingly intently listening to the songs, the testimonies and exhortations, though in fact she was lifting up her heart in a private way to God and in the flood light of the Spirit reviewing her past life with that swiftness, penetration and power that is only possible when a soul has found communion with this friendly Adviser. And so sometimes she was looking at a speaker, seeing his lips move, and yet wholly unconscious of his words. At another time some spoken words seemed to fit in with those higher letterless words that were coming to her, showing her the weakness of her humanity and the grace and love of God. How weak she had been, how she had restricted and restrained and given over her religion until its power had been almost nominal; how she had let baser thoughts and doubts occupy her mind; how she had been ungrateful and faultfinding; how she had let her influence

become more that of a show actress, and had led the thoughts of her companions in that direction—for these things she was blaming herself, and when the captain came down and spoke to her at the close of the meeting, she asked that she might see Miss Ames, and when she had come eagerly to her with that quiet smile of sympathy, Helen told her of her life, unfolding the darkness, the shortcomings and hopes, freely, and as a poor homesick child would have to a mother.

The afternoon of the second day after this, Helen might have been seen entering the mill, where she had been so long at work, ascending the stairs and passing down the "old line." Her presence was calling forth many eager looks and comments, threatening to abolish the work entirely for the time being, and seeing this she hurried along to Sue and spoke to her.

"Tell all the crowd to meet to-night below, will you?"

"You'll be there?"

"Yes."

"Couldn't you get a persish?"

Helen shook her head and added, "I'll tell you why to-night."

The glaring torches in the engine room disclosed to Helen, as she entered that night, the motley crowd that had given her there a farewell only a few short nights before. As she looked upon them, though she had passed the last hours of the afternoon in a little room at the Mud House, in anxious prayer and preparation for this moment—she turned deathly

white and her teeth came together firmly. They had cheered as she entered and had cried out, "Hurrah for our little beauty," "Let's have her dance," "Shake hands wid de gang." "No, no, a speech, a speech; give us de spiel first." And this last suggestion had prevailed. She was given a box to stand on, and then Sue pounded with her usual fierceness with a stick upon a board, to "still de gab," and in the silence that ensued, with a clear winning voice which became stronger as she proceeded Helen told them of her trips down town and that she wished to return them their money.

Imagine you their dismay if not disgust, as they heard the ending of their plans. But the quick vibrant buzz that went through the little audience was hushed into an unwonted silence as their speaker in broken, emotional tones, but with a girlish, uncere-monious, unskilled eloquence told them of the life of the soul, which is more than meat or drink and the vanities of unprofitable pleasure.

As she finishes they vote that they "can't blame her nohow, that she's de boss an' if she'd ruther go in de Army than on de Stage it wuz just the same to them, but they'd like to 'ave come and see her perform." This was Susie Himet's wording of their attitude and there was a somewhat half-hearted cheer after their declaration. The money which Helen had returned was carefully distributed again, and then she went and occupied again that night the little room in which she had spent her first night at the mill.

CHAPTER XXX

On the evening of that day on which Harry Spencer had tried unsuccessfully to speak to Helen at the store, he, as soon as he was dismissed, hurried to Mrs. Gray's, that he might see her and talk with her there, but as she had, he found things changed there and the red-faced Irish woman much in evidence.

After a good deal of questioning and time lost, he found "that sich a girl had been there and had gone right away agin to see the owner of the house about some sticks of furniture as she said she once had, though for herself she doubted it," and she asked with a great grin if the gurrul had been up to any tricks of cheatin' or the likes of that.

After administering a somewhat startling rebuke to the woman for her readiness to suspicion, Harry hastened to the owner and found him just leaving his office. Yes, Helen Parker had been there but had gone away, he did not even know in which direction.

About the furniture—had she said anything to him about it? The man seemed of a sudden greatly angered. "Yes, she thought I had her furniture, but I never saw it and I told her so," and he proceeded to strengthen his statement by sundry unconnected oaths.

This in turn aroused Harry, and in his increasing anxiety about Helen he would have faced ten such as

he—at least he stood up to the man, and between him and the door, with an expression on his face that held the man back and brought answers, such as they were, to his questions.

“Did she say her furniture and other things were gone?”

“Yes,” snapped the man.

“And you hadn’t taken it?”

“D—— ——— it no, I never saw it.”

“But didn’t you have an idea who could have taken it?”

“That —— old hag, Gray, I suppose She cheated me out of the rent. I’ll put detectives on her track, I’ll find her and I’ll choke her,” he cried out, fiercely.

“I went to Mrs. Gray myself. This girl was sick, and she said she would store her things right there in a room for her.”

This only elicited a disdainful snort from the owner.

“Well—do you think this girl, Miss Parker, went to find Mrs. Gray?”

“D—— ——— it, ——— I don’t know, I don’t know where she could go.”

“And you think that old Irish woman didn’t take her things?”

“Can’t tell, better search her. If you can’t find ’em she’s probably sold them and spent the money.”

“And Miss Parker did not say anything that would give you any idea of where she was going or what she was going to do?”

“No, no, no, she did not ———”

After a moment’s thought, as there seemed to be

nothing further he could hope to learn here, Harry stepped outside, whereupon the man hastily closed and locked his door, and went stumping off down the hall muttering to himself, though as he went Harry was tempted to give him a hearty kick for his profanity and high temper.

But what was to be done now. Helen had evidently found all her possessions gone, and had come this far in search of them, without success, and as far as he could see, she had gone without any further or future hopes. But where to? Probably back to her old place for one night at least, and he had missed her on the way, or maybe to his own room to consult with him. The more he thought of this last the more plausible it seemed. She probably had been waiting there since six o'clock. How stupid of him not think of it before.

So he hurried home, fretting at the slowness of the cars, imagining that she would get tired waiting, and might, perhaps, leave, disappointed, and without any effort on his part to cheer her up.

But he was disappointed. As far as he could learn no one had been there to see him, so, rallying his hopes again, he went over to the house of the Irishwoman again and inquired, but she had not returned there.

Again he went to his room, exhausted and nervous, and with evil calamities and gloomy forebodings filling his mind. He passed the remainder of the evening trying to convince himself that her had only gone to the home of one of the clerks, or to that of one of her girl friends in the church, or possibly back to the hospital.

The next day he watched every customer that came within sight, thinking it might be she, inquired of the girls in the store, and of the manager, who could only tell him of their short interview and his refusal to give her her old position, and in the evening he went out to the home of some of her girl friends, but all efforts failed to bring him any clue.

Another day passed and another. Working in a store while one has anything like this occupying one's mind is misery indeed, and Harry was haggard and tired out, forgetful and absent minded. He was thinking of that railroad disaster which had been only a joke of the girls, and which might now be so easily a possibility, or of the fever she had had which might return with added force, because of her exertions and the shock of her loss. He was thinking of her entering some dangerous part of the city and entrapped, a prisoner and helpless. These are not cheerful things to think about while one is explaining the beauty and strength and style of a pair of shoes, and when one is helpless to act, or even to plan, and so Harry went to the manager that night and asked for a week's vacation.

This he readily secured and he put it in faithfully in searching the city, going on street cars and on foot, by daylight and in the evenings, following a supposed clue here and some "new girl" there, inquiring at stores, factories and of policemen, planning systematically sometimes and sometimes wandering aimlessly.

But what is one amongst so many. The great swarm of humanity had hidden her easily amongst themselves and how was he to guess that she was working along-

side Sade in a woolen mill in the day time, or resting and sleeping in a little black house of Maguire's, evenings.

He had thought strongly the first day or two of putting the case of her disappearance in the hands of the policemen and detectives, but had decided he would try his own efforts first, and he thought to himself if she should come around, or he should find her she would not be pleased, perhaps, at his making such a stir or for having undue interest in her doings, but after the week of unsuccessful efforts he was wondering again if this would not be best.

He had gone back to work again, and each day passed with him hoping that she would come or that some light would be thrown somehow on the cause of her absence. Surely only foul play would have kept her so long from all her friends. And then came the letter—it was with mingled feelings he read it. How unlike her it seemed, and yet it was her writing and the cause barely hinted at was sufficient. He understood now. This man—her father—had made off with the furniture in some way. He had left word at the hospital, perhaps, and they had planned going away. She preferred her father to himself. This was a hard blow, for Harry was only human, and reformations should not stand in the way of love. If he could have known where she was he would probably have gone to her and tried to banish that barrier of fear and guilt that stood between them, but the letter gave no indications, and it said she earnestly wished he would not search for her, as it would bring only unhappiness

to her and to one whom she loved—unhappiness—well, he did not wish to make her unhappy. But why, oh why, had this horrible barrier been put between them. Was it fate? How often that word stands with us for the unexplainable, if unpleasant. Be that as it may and whether Harry had decided that the separation was—fate—or not, this letter served to relieve to a great extent his anxiety.

Though now and then, as he thought of it, there would come doubts or fears that possibly she might have some personal grievance, that he had said something to offend, had not been attentive enough in her sickness, or that her furniture had really been lost and she was blaming him for it; but common sense, and a review of her letter and of the past, served always to banish these fancies and he had tried to reconcile himself to her attitude.

So he passed these months at work; with an uneasiness of heart; with a sterner face than he had once had; smiling sometimes, but with a lingering pain in the smile that spoiled it; talking less to his customers; working more mechanically; going to church more uninterestedly; seeming to care for no pleasure, and to be without ambition.

There is a zest in life, an enthusiasm that enhances it one third, which, if taken away, leaves duty, that other third of man's nature which is above mean life or existence, only. And, in Harry, this first had been crushed and shattered by the tearing away, as it were, of her upon whom he had placed his affections, who had inspired his hopes, shared and increased his

pleasures and occupied his thoughts, so that he was only two-thirds the man he had been. We might say here that two-thirds of a good man is better than the whole of a poor one, and could Harry have been told this, with the right sort of emphasis, and in a not-too-sober tone, it might have cheered him a little. But, anyhow, he was to be cheered in a better way.

One day he was busy as usual fitting shoes, when, looking up, he saw a Salvationist standing by the railing watching him. Something in her face attracted him and he looked again—Helen Parker!—Hurrah—Hallelujah! There was no word that could express his wild joy. Present in beautiful, winsome bodily existence, with a smile of recognition lighting up her features, with her bonnet and garb of the consecrated Salvationist, his doubts, and fears, and questions, all vanished completely at the sight of her. Wherever she had been, why she had been there, or what she had been doing mattered nothing now.

He arose and went to her, but what he said he could not remember afterwards, though he had the impression that he said but little and that of not very great importance, and he remembered her saying, "You cannot talk now. Come to the hall, to-night, and see me," and then she had gone, and he was busy over his shoes again with only a card in his hand, a smiling face and a lightened heart, to prove that it had not been only a dream.

Needless to say that evening found him one of the audience in the S. A. hall. He had tried to find Helen before the meeting. There had come to him,

after she had left, seemingly a thousand questions he should have asked her, but she had been in some open air, or something, and he must wait through the whole meeting. But she would be in his sight, he would watch her, anyhow. And through the whole of that unceremonious service he did watch her; nothing startling enough was said or done, to attract his eyes from her; she seemed the center piece and the reflection of all interest upon the platform, to him; he watched with amazement and delight her slender fingers playing over the strings of a guitar; he listened to distinguish her voice in the singing; he heard, with thrilling heart, her emotionally spoken testimony and the encouraging hallelujahs about her. She seemed at home, here. Could she have been here all this time, and, if so, why had she not come to him sooner, or, why had he not thought of coming here to look for her? Where was her father? Had she gotten him into the Army, too? Had they infused some of the fire and grace of salvation into his miserable life?

So, after the last hallelujah and while the people were leaving, she came down to him. He asked, for his first question, "How long have you been here, Helen?"

"Oh, over a week."

"And why didn't you let me know?" he cried, eagerly and with wonder.

For an instant she appeared somewhat confused, and then she looked up blushing, and with charming coquettishness and answered, "And didn't I?"

They retired to a corner of the room, distant from

the seekers who had remained, and with whom some of the Salvationists were laboring, where they could talk without interruption, but they had not been talking long when a small, ragged boy came down the aisle toward them and, after some hesitation, addressed Helen. "The—the capting said you wuz Missus Parker."

"Yes, I am Helen Parker," she replied. "Was there some word?"

"Yes, Jack sent it to you," and he extended a crumpled, blackened sheet of paper. "Yir to follow me," he said.

Eagerly taking it Helen ran over under a light and read it, a cry of regret escaping her as she did so.

"What is it?"

"There is a man very sick," and then ashamed of her deception she looked him in the face and said, "it is my father."

"We will go to see him—Believe me, I will not try to injure him."

"He is very sick. Remember it was because of drink that he injured you. Oh, for my sake, won't you forget the crime? All his life he has suffered because of his conscience. He may be dying. Won't you try to lighten his mind and make his end easier, by saying you have forgiven him?"

"Why, Helen," he cried, shocked at the earnestness of her entreaty, and the tears in her eyes, "why should you think this of me? Why should you have hid from me and why—are you afraid of me? I have forgiven him, not for your sake alone, but because there is a

God, and because we say, 'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.' There has been a feeling in me that I could not conquer but no hatred or desire for revenge. I have pitied him. I have blamed the demon of drink that has been his curse. We will go and I will talk to him the best I can."

She thanked him and then ran to get her hat and cloak and they signed to the boy, who had been watching them wonderingly, to proceed.

CHAPTER XXXI

Hi Davis's saloon was not a very aristocratic place. There were not so many great mirrors, not so much shining, twinkling glass and not so many gaudy pictures, as in some such establishments. It was heated by a small cannon stove, and that cracked, so that smoke sometimes came out into the room. The bar was evidently old, and had been dented by the great mugs and was stained and discolored by the vile compounds that had been spilled upon it.

But it was not in a very aristocratic neighborhood. The adjacent buildings, and those all up and down the street, were no more richly furnished, and no more pretentious, and there were saloons, not a thousand miles away, less respectable and doing less business than Hi's.

A short, heavy set individual, who had been coming down the street, stopped at the edge of this building and looked furtively, and as though wishing to remain unseen, inside. As usual, there was a crowd of rough men inside drinking and swearing and, amongst them were two red-faced, depraved women even outdoing them in their vile utterances.

A moment's look at them and this individual drew back and ascended the rickety stairs, that led up overhead, and, partly opening the creaking door, took a brief survey of the room into which it opened. It was

a small miserable attic room under the sloping roof. A small, black, greasy lamp, sitting upon a chair, failed to relieve much of the darkness, but he could discern a bed, and also that it had an occupant covered by the coarse blankets, and, as he stood trying to accustom his eyes to the blackness of the room, a thin, pallid face lifted itself from the pillow and a weak voice called him "Jack."

The man went in and up to the bed, then turned and tried to increase the radiating power of the lamp and holding it out over the bed inquired, "What's up with you, Bill?"

"I'm sick, Jack, and I guess I'm a goner this time."

"Have you had a doctor?"

He shook his head.

"Who's been tending you?"

"Sam's been bringing up my grub," indicating a plate of cold coarse victuals upon a chair, "but I've got so I can't eat 'em, an' I got so lonesome, here, all alone, an' so tuckered an' scared with the thoughts of dying here, in the dark, f'r the lamp's a goin' out an' I wuz just watchin' to see how long the oil would last—Sam said he wuz goin' away and couldn't come up again, to-night——" Here he paused for lack of strength, but in a moment he gasped, "Won't you stay—Jack?"

"Yes—yes, I'll stay," he replied, wiping his eyes upon his coat sleeves. "Don't worry any more, and don't try to talk; it tires you. I'll get you something to eat, an' I'll fix you in a little bit, an' a doctor; we'll have a doctor, but, first, I'll get a light."

His steps were heard rapidly descending the stairs and, in a few minutes, he returned with a larger lamp.

"There, I'll set it where it won't shine too much in y'r eyes."

"D—— it," he cried, angrily, as a great noise of laughter and curses and beating of fists upon the bar came up from below, "they've got to stop that," and, then, his voice softening, he continued: "You hadn't ought to be here; we'll have to try an' see if we can't move you. Now I'll be back in a jiffy," and again he left the room and the hubbub below suddenly ceased, for the time.

The face of the sick man had greatly changed. There was almost a smile upon his features as he pulled up and re-arranged the covers and looked about upon the welcome light, and he muttered to himself almost inaudibly and almost childishly, "Jack stopped 'em, yes he did, Jack'll 'tend me."

Presently the door opened and Jack came in with a tray upon which were smoking eggs, and toast, a glass of milk, some hot coffee, an apple and some doughnuts. He had hardly known what would be suitable for a sick man, and had overhauled the stock of a nearby restaurant with a celerity that had surprised the proprietor, taking those things that appealed to his own appetite, and were "handiest."

"Here's a lay out," he said, and, propping the sick man up somewhat, he encouraged him heartily to eat talking away all the time, and promising to go after anything he could think of that he wanted. "Anything you want, now, Bill, 'cept liquor, an' you shan't

have that." He saw that Sam had brought him up some for there was a mug of it sitting on a box near the head of the bed, and taking this, to Bill's surprise, to the door, he threw it out cup and all upon the ground below.

Then he inquired again if there was anything else he could get. There was not. What he had was far above Bill's hopes of ever seeing again, and he was eating as fast as possible. This was true, for while the hand of death had almost touched this man, and lessened the earthly appetites, he was evidently, or had been, suffering from lack of nourishment, and the change from the unsympathy of Sam to Jack's bustle and solicitude had enheartened him and he ate a little of the food, with relish.

When he had finished Jack set the dishes aside and straightened up the room a bit and then, moving a chair up by the bed, sat down. "Well, y'r lookin' better a'ready; I sent f'r the doctor an' he'll be here purty soon an' then afterwards you can go to sleep, an' you'll come out all right."

But Bill shook his head. "I fell better 'specially from seein' you again, but, I'm afraid this is the end of me, and a good end too. How I did hate to die in the dark. But why did y'r come back to town, an' how did you happen to come up here?"

"God sent me," was the startling and tremblingly spoken answer. Emotionally he caught the sick man's hand in both of his "I'll tell you how it was, Bill."

"Yer see, the perleece wuz scoopin' us in that night

an' you got away an' struck f'r town, 'er I 'sposed right away you had, but they swagged me an' put me up f'r sixty days in der county jail. Well, of course, I wuz kept steady in dere. No drinkin', nor carousin' f'r two mont's, an' the man that kep' the jail treated me decent, an' every Sunday there wuz some women an' preachers come in and held meetin's an' talked to us; 'specially one lady as could talk so't I could a'listened to her all day. She talked common sense, too, Bill. Put it to me straight, 'at I wuzn't doin' right, which, of course, I knew, an' she give me some flowers, an' I got quite a notion o' doin' better. I wuz thinkin' pretty hard, sometimes. I remembered de fit you took, o' de same kind, just a few nights before de rumpus; d'you rec'lect, Bill?"

The listener assented, weakly, and with a sigh.

"Well, then, I wuz let loose, 'n I come straight f'r town, bummed it in, but I kep' sober all the way, an' when I got here, I wuz standin' on a corner thinkin' whether I should dive into fat Jake's place an' have a drink an' fergit it all, or no. I wuz terr'ble thirsty, too, an' a little longer'n I'd a went, but here I hears 'em singin' up de street, 'bout like they did in de jail only diff'runt, an' I went up to where dey wuz."

"After the singin' they went into de army hall an' I followed 'em in. It seemed like de meetin' wuz 'specially good. De man 'at talked, pard, wuz fine, an' when they wuz singin' the last song this fellar said, those who wanted to live diff'runt to stand up. Well, pard, that just hit my case. The man in front o' me got up an' so, 'fore I knew it, I'd got up, too.

Well, I felt some better, an' then they closed up the meetin', an' then they come an' spoke to us that had riz up an' a young girl come to me."

"Say, Bill, I can't tell you how she talked, or how anxious she looked. I don't remember what she said.

"She kind o' told the diff'rence 'atween men, I guess. How much better it were to live like a Christian an' how God loved us in spite o' our meanness, an' wanted us to be respectable, an' she told, too, how she didn't use to think about it, told me quite a bit o' herself; said she wuz once just like me an' didn't have any more chance o' goin' to heaven, but that now she wuz sure o' it."

"She made it plain, mate, un somehow I fergot about there bein' anybody else in de room. I wuz thinkin' how onery I'd been and afore I knew it I wuz cryin', I felt so bad and disappointed rec'lectin' how I'd done, an' what a boozer I'd got to be. It seemed to come down on me like a hod o' brick an' squeeze the life right out o' me. But, then someone begun to pray an' then I prayed and all of a sudden I wuz freed o' that weight on me an' I wuz glad, I tell you, an' I've been glad ever since.

"An' strange I don't hanker so to drink. I come right along by de saloons and had money 'bout me, an' didn't go in. You know I went right down into Hi's place, an' they all wanted me to drink, all ov 'em, but I pushed 'em away an' told 'em you wuz sick, un they must quiet down."

The sick man had been listening intently, though

the trembling of life's current had brought shadows to his face, and twitching to his lips, "Thought you didn't b'lieve in it Jack?" he gasped, with a look of incredulity.

"I didn't much, but I do now, I—here's the doctor, Bill—right in here, Mister."

The doctor came into the room and advancing to the bed looked the patient over, for a minute. A hasty examination and a few questions seemed to suffice after that look, and selecting some medicines from his case he mixed them up in the coffee cup, administered a dose and gave Jack directions as to balance of the prescription.

As he started to leave, Jack, on pretense of not having understood his directions, followed him to the door, and the two talked there in a low tone for several minutes.

As Jack came back the sick man beckoned for him to come closer: "Jack, I want to thank you f'r gettin' a doctor, but I don't b'lieve he can help me; I'm awful weak. What did he say, Jack? You asked him about me."

"Well, he said you ought ter keep quiet an' sleep, an' that's why I'm sorry I've done what I have, but yet—if I didn't she'd——"

"What's that?"

"Well, I didn't tell you, yet, how I come to come here. You see I wuz talkin' with that girl quite a spell, an' she give me this 'ere testament, an' then she began talkin' about her father; that he wuz like me; that he drank, an' all that; an' that she had had a

chancest but hadn't ever talked to 'im right; an' that she wanted to see him so bad——"

"What —what?"

"An', pard, if you'll b'lieve it, t'wuz your gal, sames I've heard you talk of."

The father raised up with almost a superhuman effort.

"Are you sure it wuz—she wanted to see me?"

"There, I wuz afraid o' that," cried Jack, covering him up as he again sank back upon the bed, "I wuz afraid it 'ud rile you up, an' the doctor said you must keep quiet."

"I—I will,—but tell me about it, Jack."

"Well it wuz your girl, an' she said she wuz askin' everybody about you; 'at she wanted to find you. Then when I told her you wuz an old pard o' mine an' that I thought I could track you some'eres she wuz awful tickled an' asked all sorts o' question, an' made me promise to send for her as soon as I set eyes on you. That wuz last night, an', so, this afternoon, I set out like I wuz detectivin' you. Went to Hickeys an' around considerable, and then come here an' found you, sick. So I b'lieve it were a good thing I come, an' that's why I said God sent me."

"And did you send—for Helen?"

"Yes, I sent young Borkey, with a note, right away, an' that's what bothers me; whether it 'ud be best fer you to see her."

"Yes, I shall—I want to if it kills me."

"Well, p'raps it won't make much diff'rence with you, anyhow. I wish I could stop that carousin' down there, that's a—a lot sight worse—an' the girl

can talk to you the best kind. She can pray fer you, too, an', if I wuz you I'd have her do it, pard, un I'd try to pray myself; try to straighten y'rself up with God and tell him yer sorry, any way. It seems like 'twere no use, I know I used to think so, but, I guess, I wuz worse 'un you, an' I feel that I did it. Yer bein' sick couldn't make no diff'rence, seems to me, er if you should die right in fifteen minutes afterward. I'd do it pard if I wuz to live er die; it's the best way to do, an' you can stick by it that Jack Tarr'll be glad to see you do it."

He had risen and was pacing hastily up and down the room; he was longing to say more; he felt almost tempted to pray with his old companion, himself, but, at the same time, there was coupled with his sense of inability a strong faith in this girl who had helped him, and a feeling that if he should leave it to her it would be better. But, why did she not come? Time passed slowly; the little room was so short, that he passed back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, seeming to walk a mile and yet, only a minute had elapsed, and then another mile and another minute. He wiped the perspiration from his forehead; he seemed to be sweating at every pore, and yet he could not content himself to sit down.

The look of interest had faded from the sick man's face, and he had sunk into a semi-conscious state. Now and then he would cough, and then his breath would come in uneven gasps, with a harsh wheeze; his eyes rolled uneasily in his head and, sometimes, he would groan as though from pain.

Was he dying? What could he do for him? He stopped and looked at him, a minute; such was death, so all men must die. Then he took another turn about the room. Was this man to be lost? Was there no one to help him? He went up and grasped the long, bony hand in both his.

“Bill!”

“Oh—oh—yes, Jack. Is it her?”

“No, she ain’t come, pard.”

“What is it? D’ye want to speak?”

“How are you feelin’?”

“I guess’t I wuz dreamin’,” and, then, he began to drift back into that lethergy which threatened to end in oblivion.

Suddenly, light steps were heard at the head of the stairs, and there was a rap, which, light as it was, served to awaken him wonderfully, and at the same time to bring an exclamation of joy from Jack who hurried to open the door.

CHAPTER XXXII

A low-spoken query, which was inaudible to the sick man, Jack's stammering answer, "Yes'm, he's here," and then she, for whom he had been so eagerly straining his eyes, glided through the open door and up to the bed.

"Oh, father," she cried, after an anxious look into his face, "you are so sick. Why did you leave me?" she had taken one of his hands and sinking upon her knees laid her head upon it, while the tears streamed from her eyes.

Varied emotions, of tenderness and the affection of a father were evidently struggling within him, but his lips seemed unable to frame any reply. Then he was seized with a violent spell of coughing which almost deprived him of breath, and, as his head was thrown back, in the effort seemingly to help fill his lungs, his eyes fell upon Harry who had entered the room but was standing yet by the door.

"Ah," he gasped, starting involuntarily. And, then, in a tone of half terror, with a sort of crafty joy, he added, "they can't hang me, now."

"No, that's true," Harry replied, with some hesitation, advancing to the bedside.

"Did yer fergive me for it?" the sick man asked, making an effort to extend his hand, "I didn't mean to. I wanted you to know that I wuz sorry; that I

wisht—that I didn't go to do it," he affirmed with seemingly unnatural strength.

"I know it, I forgave you—no—I had nothing to forgive," replied Harry in a tone so calm and positive that Helen even lifted her eyes to him in amazement. "It was against God; he says, 'Thou shalt not kill.'—Has he forgiven you?"

"No—no—He ain't—I'm lost."

"Yes, you're lost," repeated Harry in the same quiet but stern voice. "What do you care for my opinion of you? I cannot injure, or help you. You are going just as much as though you were on the gallows, you are just as much lost. You are a murderer; a thief; a drunkard; a forger; a blasphemer. What does it matter if you come to God's judgment from a rope around your neck, or from this bed? Why did you run from punishment here and yet go to such an awful punishment without a struggle?"

"Can't you see what you are? Blinded all the time by that one knife thrust into my father's side. It's not alone that. It is just as much the anger you felt before you struck him, and the drinking, before that. It's your character; it's your unbelief; it's your unthankfulness and hatred toward God. Can't you see how you've come to hate yourself? What do you suppose He thinks of you? What does your daughter think of you? She loves you, but, have you treated her right? What of Jack? He's found salvation, he found that sin could be washed away and came to tell you about it right away. I just spoke to him. He says you're his old pard, but that you didn't pay much

attention to what he said, and he's feeling bad over it. Why, man, if I was you I'd be crying out with my last breath for mercy. I'd hold up my hand with the last strength I had and cry out to God, 'Save me from hell, why must I be lost?' He'll hear you, I say. His mercy is more than all the sins of the people."

He was standing as he spoke this; his youthful but sturdy frame towering above the sick man; his features calm, with eyes fixed intently upon him to whom he spoke as though unconscious of other things; his words, clearly spoken, yet with a touch of emotion in them now and then, coming, somehow, with a thrilling, penetrating eloquence to Helen and to Jack, but, on the ears of that other hearer they were falling heavily, with a tense overpowering sensation of conviction.

The face upon the pillow was ashen; the lineaments working in anguish his despair seemed almost unearthly, unendurable. Helen turned from it in horror (Oh, why should he be made to suffer so?) and lifted her hands to Harry in mute appeal that he would desist, wondering, even then, however, at the impression of strength and forcefulness of character that she saw in his face. But he continued in a lower, softer, tone.

"Don't say you're lost. That means you've lost the last chance of pardon, the last chance of happiness, that you have spurned the last chance of goodness. I want you to realize what is hanging over you. You cannot live long; you know it yourself. My father cursed when they told him he must die, I remember

it yet. He cursed you and that curse seems to have been well spoken. Your life has been cursed; your body shows it; your character shows it; your soul shows it worse. You can't redeem your life now; you can't get good; there is only one thing you can do. Go to him to whom the curse is powerless, who can cleanse your heart and change your soul. It is his mercy and his forgiveness you want. I have tried to show you how badly you need it, I wish I could show you how willing he is to give it to you."

"Willing," yes, Helen clutched that word convulsively. Lost now, but, there was still a little time for rescue. The danger had been terribly shown. Yes, they had felt it before but not as now. And there was a hope of relief, a certainty of a Savior. They must not hold back from him!

Eagerly, and unmindful of the tears that blinded her eyes and choked her utterance, she began to plead the Rescuer forcibly for that sinner, as she had been lately learning to plead for others like him, and, then, she lifted up her voice in an earnest petition of burning, anxious, holy words, kneeling still, as she had knelt, with her father's hand in hers.

And he, writhing in an agony of remorse and guilt, in a stricken, broken voice began to follow and repeat her words, trying to adjust them to his need; trying to put greater force in them and to make them his own; trying to see past the blackness of his life; trying to find, somewhere, a hope that could satisfy, or rather, trying to believe what must, because of the witnesses, be true.

Jack Tarr was sitting in the chair, bent far over and his face covered by his hands. Harry still stood by the bedside, and, when occasion offered, put in a word that might be helpful. Thus they plead with him and with God. "Oh," cried Helen, "believe in Christ that he can save, I know he can; I have seen him do it; I have felt it; he saved me, and he can save you, just as well. All three of us, here, are witnesses of his power. Don't you believe us? Do you think we're deceived, or are deceiving you? Why then can't you believe him?" A moment afterward there came something of an incredulous, incomprehensible expression upon the face of the sick man, as one who has seen something very wonderful, and, then, there was the gradual brightening, the passing away of a cloud; the impressing upon the countenance of a smile, that could only be wrought by that great triumph of freedom which transforms a man, and that seems so strange to those who will not believe in the Spirit coming upon the soul.

"I believe—he will," he said, as though to himself and wonderingly.

"Yes—yes, he will," Helen affirmed anxiously.

"Pray agin, girl—I want to be sure," and she needed no second bidding. The man had begun to feel the pardon; the conviction had come to him that his sins had been forgiven, but with the joy was such an unutterable regret, and such a heavy remembrance of the horror and blackness which had been lifted from him that what he needed now was comfort; an assurance that the divine favor had not been given grudg-

ingly. In a word he needed the feeling deepened that "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." "For, as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him," and that, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

Harry recognized something of this need from his face and from his words, and, when Helen had risen to her feet he held his little hymnal out in front of her indicating one of the songs with his finger. It was "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," and comprehending his wish she started it at once. How that hymn has thrilled into human hearts. As they sang it, there, this man was soon sobbing like a child. Below in Hi's place rough, blasphemous voices were shouting out some drunken doggerel with interludes of cursing and wild laughter, while the barkeeper stood listening with a great grin on his face. Above were those three glad believers, for even Jack had joined in, softly singing

"Just and Holy is Thy Name,
Prince of Peace and Righteousness;
Most unworthy, Lord, I am,
Thou art full of love and grace,"

while upon the bed lay one whose heart was full of smiles, even though there were tears in his eyes and coursing down his sunken, wrinkled cheeks. But still above that, farther up, were the angels, uniting, perhaps, in a rapturous, tremulous, ravishing melody, while listening with surely a smile of pleasure sits

He whose power is unaccountable, whose mercy is as the boundless deep.

So, were one a philosopher, and especially a Christian one, this would have served for much thought and probably for a discourse regarding this advancement from lower to higher. The possibilities of man; the possible unselfishness, and the possible debasement; the fitting levels; the analyzation of character; the searching into of motives; the meaning of expressions; the tracing of habits and ancestors. A volume could be written from these two earthly scenes. The third is too high, it brings in the heights of theology and is beyond our poor philosopher.

So they lingered over the sick man, singing the songs that would be fitting, for some time, until Harry, making an exclamation that they must stop the noise below, went down stairs taking Jack with him and leaving, as he wished, the father and daughter alone.

What followed, what the parting words between these two, none shall, perhaps, know. At the end of an hour, when Harry opened the door and looked in, she was kneeling by his side, one of her hands in his the other stroking his grizzled hair. He was unconscious at intervals and seemed to awaken with a start, being calmed again at her voice and the tightened pressure of her hand, but he was sinking faster now; the lamp of life was flickering uncertainly and with diminished power, and, as the gray light of another day began to enter the little room, he ceased to breathe.

Harry went for food and persuaded Helen to eat some and then went to an undertaker's to engage his services. When he returned he stood before Helen, hat in hand. "Is there anything further I can do? I ought to go to the store, but I'll get away and come back as soon as I can."

"What!" she cried with a wan smile, "only one night has passed!"

"Yes, one night has passed and another day's duties are before us."

"Could you manage to send word to Miss Ames to come? She is so good."

"Yes, I will see her, even if I am a little late."

"You are good. Some would have felt hard," and she pointed toward the bed with a gesture that explained.

"Helen," he cried. "I love you. I have tried to forgive for your sake. I am not so unselfish, I——," but, remembering where they were, and the sacredness of death, he forebore, and turned away, after he read in her eyes an answer to what he wished to say.

Jack had heard, too, for he was sitting in the corner, but he had twisted his big feet around behind the chair and ducked his head to the lowest in his effort to appear unobtrusive.

So they parted and Helen went back and pressed a kiss upon those cold lips, that had in life served their master to his hurt, and sitting down thought of a kiss that had sealed her decision before, near the Mud House, and of other things.

"Bill" Parker had left this world, but who shall say

that, having at the last been introduced to the Divine Friend, he had not been welcomed? That he who is stronger than the guilt of sin had not extended to him the wedding garment? That arrayed in the robe of spotless white, his poor, dwarfed, blackened soul had not put on new immortality and ascended to the King's house? Blinking, perhaps, in the sudden transition from dark alleys and wretched surroundings, and companionship with poverty and wickedness, into the blaze of glory and the peace of the blessed, his head uncovered by crown or stars of service, but his countenance shining with a glad light.

Who shall say that the father's curse was not, through the son, averted, and through the strength of the Redeemer set aside, as far as the east is from the west?

Where, you ask, is Harry Spencer? A quiet, pleasant-featured floor walker in ———, ——— & ———'s. You will see him there. Helen Parker has become his wife. You will find her in a certain little set of rooms not far from Mrs. Gray's old boarding house. Or, perhaps, glancing under one of those queer poke bonnets, you may notice a beautiful face with black eyes crowned by waving hair; the face of an angel. Yes, it's she, for she often goes out with the Salvationists. If you should ever eat dinner in Armstrong's restaurant, glance into the face of your waiter—it is Jack Tarr. If you enjoy the theaters, perhaps you've seen Sade, for she goes from one to the other of them; wherever they can make use of her accomplishments

which are still quite limited, though, as she told Helen once afterward, "There wuz a spell 't I couldn't get my feet in anywhere's, an' had to go back and work for de old boss 'mongst de gang, an' I missed you to home so I couldn't stand it. Things have changed, ain't they though?"

THE END

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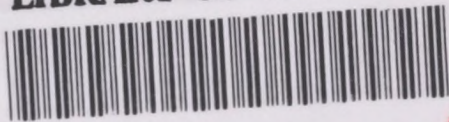
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